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London gets more dramatic every Weekend.

Most people would agree there's no shortage of so-called TV drama.

Where some think the shortage lies is in the quality.

So we'd like to point out the ways in which London Weekend are answering the criticism.

The first is called *Upstairs, Downstairs*. Nationally, the last series was watched regularly by over 13 million people, 3¼ million of them being Londoners. And was never out of the top 20 in the National ratings.

So *Upstairs, Downstairs* can certainly claim to be one of the most popular drama series ever seen on television.

And it's also an enormous quality success.

It's won no less than 12 major awards. For scripts, production, performance. On both sides of the Atlantic.

The point is this: the series is a clear example that mass and trash are not necessarily synonymous.

And now, instead of resting on our laurels, we have set out to prove the point again. And again.

With *Affairs of the Heart*, 13 plays adapted from the stories of Henry James.

And with *Intimate Strangers*, a new drama series created by the producer of the award-winning *Helen—A Woman of Today*.

Both these new series have been produced with the same respect for quality and intelligence as *Upstairs, Downstairs*.

And all three are running nationally throughout the Autumn.

We invite you to watch them. Above all because you'll enjoy them. But also because, if past experience has made you cynical about the quality of TV drama, you're in for a surprise.

A dramatic surprise.



LONDON WEEKEND TELEVISION

Lack of Sleep

LAST NIGHT I dreamt of my own death. From my window, I saw a hearse parked outside the front door and, though I was far from being dead, it was evident it had come for me. Mrs Maundy, dressed in black, was calling out impatiently from the front steps and anxiously scanning the empty street. She urged me to hurry while there was no one about and reminded me that to keep the hearse waiting was an expensive business. Typical. "I'm not ready," I cried out to her. "Send it away. I'm not ready to die as yet." Most dreams fade the moment you wake up but this one remains fresh in my mind.

It is several days now since I have been able to get a good night's rest and I am at my wits' end. How cruel it is to have to get out of bed so early in the morning and be forced to crouch in front of the electric fire waiting for Mrs Maundy to come and clean the room. If only she would let me sleep a bit longer the nightmares, I am sure, would disappear of their own accord. What a delightful thing sleep is! That hour or two of rest I am able to snatch towards morning is much too vital to be interrupted and squandered so recklessly. But that, needless to say, is precisely what happens to me.

The effects of all this have not been altogether lost on Mrs Maundy. She is an observant woman. However, she won't let herself be affected by me. Not her. She doesn't like the smallest inconvenience. Mrs Maundy never swerves from the letter of the law as laid down by herself. That, by her book, is a crime. About three days ago she said to me, "You'd better watch yourself. You're much too jumpy for my liking. It makes me nervous when old people get like that. You should go for a long walk. Use up all that excess

energy you have." I replied that my jumpiness, as she chose to call it, had nothing to do with excess energy but was due, purely and simply, to lack of sleep. "Huh!" she retorted.

The trouble is that my room, being at the top of the house, is the first to be cleaned in the morning. Mrs Maundy firmly believes it is easier for her to work downwards rather than upwards. Certainly it may be easier for her. I don't deny that. Nevertheless, at my age you would have expected her to show a little more consideration. But no. She wakes me—me!—while she allows Herbert, that dreadful son of hers, to go on sleeping peacefully on the first floor. "Is this fair?" I asked. She stared at me scornfully. "Herbert is a working man," she replied. "What work do *you* have to do?" I had no wish to drag Herbert further into the argument. That, I suspected, was dangerous ground. And not only because I feared to antagonise his mother. Above all, I felt it would not be wise to get on the wrong side of Herbert Maundy. Yet Mrs Maundy regards herself as the soul of kindness. I have listened to her working herself into a fine froth over the treatment of those she is fond of describing as "our senior citizens." I can't square it with the way she treats me. But that is Mrs Maundy all over.

Risking her wrath, I reminded her of her avowed concern and suggested—as politely as I could—that right under her very nose was a golden opportunity to display it by working upwards for a bit ("to tide me over this difficult patch" was how I put it) instead of downwards and so giving me a few extra minutes of precious rest. She did not take at all kindly to the suggestion and, for a moment, I thought she was going to lose her temper and shout at me—as she does to the other

tenants now and again. That would have been hard to take. If there is one thing I am unable to tolerate, it's people shouting at me. When that happens a kind of raging black cloud seems to envelop me. Thankfully, she didn't shout. "Are you trying to teach me my own job?" she asked frigidly. I let the matter drop. The Day of Judgment would find her working downwards and not upwards.

Yesterday morning she again said, "You're altogether too jittery for my liking. It makes me nervous. If you don't want to go for a walk then go to the cinema. See a nice film. Or read a book. I don't care what you do—within limits, of course. Only, for God's sake, stop being so jittery. I don't want you dying off on my hands in the middle of the night."

Dying off on her hands in the middle of the night! How could she bring herself to speak to me like that? You don't say that sort of thing to a man in my position. It's insensitive. Downright insensitive. As if I could help it if I died. Recently I have noticed that Mrs Maundy has fallen into the habit of taunting me about death. It has become one of those perverse games she likes to play with me. She always manages to introduce the subject into our conversations nowadays. She enjoys observing the effect it has on me. "I can see you don't care to talk about it," she would remark sententiously, "but all the same you should prepare yourself for it. Get yourself into the right frame of mind. It's no good pretending you're going to live forever."

SHE TREATS DEATH as if it was something unnatural and obscene. I remember what happened when Mr Maundy died. For some days none of the other tenants was aware that he had died and if I had been out at work like the rest of them, I don't suppose I would have known either. We hadn't even been told he was ill. Everything was hushed up. It was in the middle of the afternoon when there was hardly anyone about on the street I saw the hearse drive up to the front door and wondered who it could be for. There was a solitary wreath on the coffin. Two hours later, having, as you might say, disposed of the body, she was back, stern and white-faced. By evening she appeared to be perfectly recovered. I expect it will be like that when I die. No

crowd of mourners. No tears. Perhaps not even a solitary wreath.

Keeping as calm as I could, I assured her I was merely suffering from lack of sleep. My jitteriness, my jumpiness, whatever it pleased her to call it, had nothing to do with dying and would she be so kind as to refrain in the future from making such callous remarks. "Believe me," I said, "the last thing I would want to do is die on *your* hands in the middle of the night." However, Mrs Maundy doesn't recognise sarcasm. It's a blind spot with her.

But enough of this. I have no desire to dwell on this subject. It depresses me.

I OFFERED to do without the privilege of having my room cleaned every morning. Not that it is a privilege. Strictly speaking, it is my right and her duty. I pay an extra ten shillings a week to have it done. This fact doesn't prevent Mrs Maundy from behaving as if it were an imposition I personally inflict on her and from which she gains no advantage. That too is Mrs Maundy all over. She rejected my proposal out of hand, saying she had yet to meet an old person who knew what cleanliness meant. "Not that I am blaming the little dears," she meandered on in that sickening, sugary way of hers. "All the same, you must admit old folk do tend to let themselves go to pieces. I hear too many stories about your sort passing over and the body not being discovered for days." She shook her head and smiled. "I can't afford to take any chances." She giggled. "In any case you pay for having your room cleaned and I don't want it to be said of me I cheat anybody out of their fair due." "Ah, Mrs Maundy," I was on the point of replying, "you cheat me out of my fair due of sleep and, what's more, you enjoy doing it." Naturally I held my peace. "Now, now. None of your cheek." She squinted slyly at me and wagged a finger in my face. "Cheek?" I was puzzled. She laughed. "If by any chance you're planning to worm your way out of paying the little extra. . . I've been in this business long enough to know all the little tricks and schemes you tenants can get up to."

I protested. Ignoring her unsavoury reference to bodies not discovered for days, I insisted that I was not planning to worm my way out of anything. The extra ten shillings

a week I paid for having my room cleaned was a trifling consideration compared to the precious sleep I was losing. I was perfectly willing to sacrifice it. To waive my right and relieve her of an onerous duty. "An old man like you," she said, "with nothing to do all day but sit up there and stare out of your window—and, let me add, with the sunniest room in the whole house—and you object to getting up a little early. That is the only sacrifice I want you to make." I was sorely tempted to answer her thus: "Thank you for mentioning that. Don't forget on top of everything else you charge me an extra five shillings because it is the sunniest room in the house. It's a bit much to make a profit out of that sort of thing. But since you make a profit out of it you should learn a lesson from the sun. It works its way *upward* in the morning. Take note of that. Upward. Not downward." I restrained myself. A long speech would have exhausted me. And, as I have already remarked, Mrs Maundy is impervious to sarcasm. Anyway, she had such a queer expression. I was puzzled. It was almost as if I had spoken my thoughts out aloud. "I'm only jittery because I don't get enough sleep," I said. "Nonsense," she replied, moving to the door and continuing to look at me with that queer expression. "Old people don't need much sleep. Everybody knows that." There the matter has rested. How can you fight such blind obstinacy? It was the closest she and I had ever come to having an open disagreement. Which just goes to show how bad things are with me. How can she say that old people do not need much sleep? That is a lie. A fabrication.

But no! I must control myself. I must be calm. My nerves really are in shreds. I jump at the slightest sounds. Sometimes I forget what I am doing. My thoughts wander disconnectedly and inconclusively. Most worrying of all, I find I cannot say for certain whether I have actually done or said something or simply imagined myself doing or saying it. Are these the infirmities of old age? Or do they herald the onset of a horror I dare not think about too much? Not merely death—though that is horror enough. But I refuse to think about it. Not now. It has all become so confusing for me of late. My dreams can seem so real, so compellingly vivid. On the other hand, what I do when

I am awake can assume all the fantastic, disjointed qualities of dreams. What a torture it is. Frequently I have seen Mrs Maundy stop and stare at me with that queer expression. "What is it?" I ask anxiously. "What are you looking at me like that for?"

ONE INCIDENT in particular obsesses me. To tell the truth, it is that which has reduced me to my present state. I had gone to the pub on the corner. Often I go there at lunch-time for an hour or two. I find it a nice change from my room and it relaxes me to see different faces and listen to the chatter of different voices. Opening the front door and walking down the steps helps to remind me that my room is the habitation of a free man and not the cell of a man imprisoned. Mrs Maundy doesn't approve of these excursions, though she herself isn't above the occasional pint. "Wasting all your money on beer," she would say, wagging her finger in my face. "But just you wait. One day I shall be told you have no money left to pay the rent and then, I suppose, you will expect to live off my charity. You old people!" As if I would ever allow myself to live off her charity. That would be a fate worse than death. Still, I don't let her prevent me. A man must stick up for himself. And the fact that Mrs Maundy disapproves adds a keen edge to my pleasure. It may even be the whole pleasure.

I was sitting at my usual table in the saloon bar staring at the whirling patterns traced on the coloured glass of the windows when I suddenly became aware of someone standing in front of me. I had noticed this lady many times before without paying more than a cursory attention to her. She was one of the fixtures of the pub. An explosive cascade of bright red hair foamed down to her shoulders. It had doubtless been dyed or bleached to that striking colour. Her lips were usually daubed with some gaudy preparation not always in harmony with the painted eyebrows. To me she was virtually an extension of the coloured glass. I looked at one as I looked at the other. She was not very pretty. Flesh running to seed prematurely, bruised by indulgence. She glowed with a dull, cosmetic sheen. Perched on a bar-stool, she would survey the regulars with a kind of

defiant but inviting lewdness. When she was bored, she preened and ogled herself in the mirror behind the bar. She drank a great deal. All of this I noticed because it was impossible not to. But, beyond that, I never paid her too much attention. Not until now.

"How about buying me a drink, grandfather?" She pushed up her hair and stared into the mirror. "I'm skint this morning." Without invitation, she sat down next to me.

The regulars were amused. "Watch out! She's expensive, that one."

I was so astonished—and embarrassed—by this focussing of the pub's attention on myself, I didn't know where to look.

"Don't pay any attention to them, grandfather." She put a blue-veined hand on my coat-sleeve and stroked it gently. "They're just jealous of you."

I couldn't remember when last somebody had stroked me like that. My skin tingled. How soothing it was. How soothing to be stroked so gently. "Buy me a drink, grandfather." I must have implied assent by some subtle, surrendering motion because she immediately turned towards the bar. "A whisky and soda, Fred. Double." The barman gazed enquiringly at me. I must confess I blanched when I heard the order. But while she stroked me like that and while wave upon wave of stale, body-scented sweetness washed over me, I could do nothing else. Her presence encompassed me. The barman, receiving no sign to the contrary from me, shrugged and went away to pour the drink. The regulars shook their heads sadly but it was as if they did so from a receding distance.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"You can call me Sally if you like. Call me anything. Whatever takes your fancy." She turned again to the bar. "Hurry up with that drink, Fred. I'm parched." Fred brought the drink himself. "Now that is what I call real service." Sally grinned up at him but he did not smile back. His face was blank. In one gulp she finished the drink, screwing up her face. She ordered another. This time Fred did not even look at me.

"I will call you Sally," I said. "I like the name."

Sally laughed. Fred brought the second drink. She drank it as she had drunk the previous one.

"I like how you stroke my arm, Sally," I said.

"Do you now, grandfather?" She stroked me now with the merest hint of roughness. "Then you can buy me another drink."

"I'm not sure I can afford it, Sally. There's the rent, you see. . . ."

She took her hand away abruptly. The painted mask was hard and closed against me.

"Don't be like that, Sally." I did not want my skin to stop tingling. It was like ceasing to exist.

"Then buy me another, grandfather."

There was no alternative. I was powerless, a victim of my craving for existence. For life. I ordered a drink for her and one for myself. Money flowed out of my wallet. After the fourth drink she said, "That's better. Now I feel human again."

"So do I, Sally," I said. "You make me feel human again."

Sally giggled. Her moist fingers lifted my coat-sleeve. She stroked my bare skin. Then it was I had my inspiration. It came to me in a flash. Just like that. Perhaps the drink had something to do with it. I began to chuckle to myself. I was thinking of Mrs Maundy. What an apt revenge it would be to take a woman like this back to her respectable lodging-house, to inject into its astringent smells these waves of stale, body-scented sweetness. I was trying to picture Mrs Maundy's face as her nose picked up the corrupting trail of vapour. Imagine. This woman! In Mrs Maundy's house. I nearly strangled on my laughter.

"What's up, grandfather? Are you drunk?"

"I have an idea, Sally." I brought my laughter under control. "Why don't you come back to my room with me? It's not far."

"Hey!" Sally exclaimed. "Hey!"

"Not for long," I coaxed.

"If you buy me a bottle of wine, grandfather," Sally said. "Anything for a bottle of wine."

ON THE WAY OUT I bought a bottle of wine. Blank-faced Fred wrapped it in a sheet of brown paper. I tucked the bottle under my arm. As we walked back to the house Sally whistled and sang which caused people to look at us curiously and disapprovingly. I believe she too was a little

drunk after all those whiskies. But I was past caring. And whenever I thought of this woman desecrating Mrs Maundy's house, I laughed out loud.

I quietened Sally when we reached the area railings. The house watched us in stony silence. I unlocked the front door as quietly as I could and peeped in. The hall was gloomy and empty. I started at the sight of some white envelopes strewn on the red carpet. Steadying my jangled nerves, I signalled for Sally to follow me. She crept in, a hand clapped over her mouth to stifle her giggles. I stooped to pick up the envelopes, then changed my mind. What was the point? No letters ever came for me. I led Sally up the lightless stairs to my room at the top of the house. She settled herself on the bed. Now she had come I wasn't sure what to do with her. She seemed more than ever a garish apparition. Reclining on my bed, she was as startling as the envelopes strewn on the hallway carpet. Somehow my idea didn't seem so funny anymore. I was frightened.

"Hey, grandfather. What's up with you? You look as if you've seen a ghost. Uncork the wine. Let's drink each other's good health."

"Yes," I said, striving to shut out the fear. "The wine . . . the wine. . ."

We drank the wine, clinking glasses. It was cheap, rough stuff and it made me sleepy.

"Come, grandfather. Come and sit beside me." She patted the bed and heaved herself over to the wall. Where she had lain the sheets were warm and scented. I nestled my head in the folds of her fleshy shoulders. She smelled of decaying roses. Her lips brushed the nape of my neck. Her presence encompassed me.

"There is something I must know, Sally."

"What is that, grandfather?"

"Are you real, Sally? Or do I dream you?"

Sally laughed. "Poor grandfather." She eased herself from me and sat up. "Does it matter?"

"No," I said after a while. "Perhaps it doesn't." And, truly, it didn't seem to matter. Not just then anyway.

"Nothing matters," Sally said.

I watched her like a child and it was like a child that I took into my mouth the speckled, ivory breast she proffered.

"Oh, Sally! I'm so old, so desolate and so frightened I won't be able to pay my rent."

"You and your rent." She wrenched her breast from my mouth.

I groped blindly for it.

"You've had enough, grandfather." She clambered out of the bed and crossed to the wash-basin. She peered into the shaving-mirror, pushing up her red hair and adjusting her clothes. Her hair flamed in the ugly glare flooding in from the window.

"Don't go so soon, Sally. Stay a while longer."

Sally laughed. She came back to the bed. "I won't be going until you pay the five pounds you owe me, grandfather." She held out her hand.

I was dumbfounded. "For what, Sally? Why do I owe you five pounds?"

"For the use of my beautiful body," Sally said.

"But I don't have five pounds to give you, Sally," I said. "If I do I won't have anything left to pay the rent with. You have no idea what Mrs Maundy can be like when it comes to that."

"Pay up, grandfather." The mask was hard again. Closed against me.

I gave her my last five pounds. "You are heartless, Sally," I said. "You have no pity for an old man."

"No," she said. "I have no pity."

I listened to her footsteps fading down the stairs. From my window I watched the pitiless lady walk quickly up the street.

THIS IS HOW THINGS stand with me at present. Therein lies the source of my sleeplessness and my nightmares. Today Mrs Maundy will expect me to hand over the rent. She will not ask for it directly. She never does. "It makes it all so crude and mercenary," she says. Nevertheless, she will be expecting it. A week in advance to be paid on Friday. That, despite her mock delicacy, is one of the laws from which she never swerves. And I have nothing to give her. My consolation is that I may have imagined the whole thing. Dreamt it. But, if that is the case, then where has the money disappeared to? I can't even lay hands on my wallet. It has vanished. I have looked on top of the wardrobe. Under the bed. I have crawled, scraping my knees, combing every inch of the floor. I have searched high and low for it. It is slowly

driving me mad. Possibly I am already mad. Yes, that is the word. That is the thought I dare not think.

Because even if Sally belonged to one of my dreams it is only the mad who dream so vividly. Oh pitiless lady, did I invent you? Did I spin you out of my longings? Maybe, as you suggested, it doesn't really matter. For, imaginary or real, and pitiless as you were, I still yearn to lay my head on your sweet-smelling breast and sleep, like a child, forever. My life ebbs for lack of you, Sally. When I think of how you stroked me and how my skin tingled, I want to scream and scream and scream. . . .

No! No! I must stop travelling round in this despairing circle. That is the recipe for madness. I refuse to work myself up into a frenzy as I crouch here like a supplicant, vainly holding out my clammy, freezing hands in front of the electric fire.

This desire to scream scares me. The man who lives in the house opposite, he screams. Like me, he has a room on the top floor. But facing north as it does, the sun rarely shines into it. Mrs Maundy constantly threatens to have them—whatever “them” might be—“cart him away.” I often wonder where they take such people and what they do with them. She would not hesitate to let “them” cart me away if I began to scream like him. Therefore I mustn't. I must be sensible and control myself. “He shouldn't be allowed to upset decent people,” she says, “screaming and carrying on the way he does. It's a disgrace. Mind, I'm not saying I'm not sorry for him and all that. He served his King and country in two world wars. But that is no excuse for upsetting decent people. He should be locked away for his own good.” Locked away for his own good! Such is the extent of Mrs Maundy's gratitude to a man “who served his King and country in two world wars.” She told me he had been a prisoner of the Japanese during the last war. The experience had driven him insane. He stands for hours at that window of his jumping up and down like a jack-in-the-box and screaming until he is hoarse. “You yellow bastards! You yellow bastards!” Terrible phantoms must patrol the darkened spaces of that deranged mind. What a lot of madness there is in this city. It's quite appalling.

My head is aching. It's horribly cold and

damp in this room despite the fire. Mrs Maundy will be here any minute, rattling her keys like a jailer. Yes. Here she comes, predictable as some infernal clockwork. How I loathe the slow, heavy, martyred tread with which she climbs the stairs. Like doom itself. She could move with greater speed if she cared to. There is nothing to prevent her. She is always boasting about the fine state of her health.

She enters, as is her wont, without knocking. I have successfully conquered the irritation which this used to cause me. She leans in the doorway, leering at me. “What a smell! You would think I hadn't cleaned this room for days. You could at least draw the curtains and get some light in here.” She crinkles her nose. “Poof! What a smell.”

“Does it smell like roses?” I ask, half-eagerly, half-fearfully.

“Roses indeed!” She giggles. “Rotting roses maybe.” She shakes her head at me. “And there you are grumbling about me cleaning it for you.”

“It's not that I grumble about,” I say. “It's. . . .”

“I know. I know. You're a lazy old man.” She pulls the curtains. The light dazzles me. I close my smarting eyes. “It snowed during the night, did you know?” I open my eyes. The roofs are white with it. The gardens are white with it. The pavements are white with it. I am oddly thrilled at the thought of all that whiteness blanketing the city. “I hate snow in the town.” Mrs Maundy's voice breaks rudely into my reverie and scatters it. “Out in the country, though, it's very beautiful. Nothing to beat our English countryside is what I always say.”

That's Mrs Maundy all over. Giving her opinions about everything. She bristles with opinions. Who gives a damn about what she thinks of the snow in town or country? She probably never set foot in the country in her entire, godforsaken life. Now she is staring at me with that queer expression again. “What is it?” I ask. “What are you looking at me like that for?”

“You're a funny one,” she says. “And getting funnier every day by the looks of it.”

“How do you mean, ‘funny’?”

“Oh nothing, nothing,” she replies hastily. “It all comes out in the wash, I expect.” She considers me wisely.

"Listen, Mrs Maundy," I say with sudden decision, "there is something I have to tell you."

She props herself against the broom and stares at me interestedly.

But my courage declines as rapidly as it had arisen. "Another time," I say, glancing evasively about the room. "When you are less busy." Thankfully, she does not press me. My cowardice disgusts me. I begin afresh. "It's to do with . . . with. . ."

"With what?" She eyes me with visibly intensifying interest.

"Nothing," I say. "It's not all that important anyway."

She wags a finger at me. "You have something weighing on your conscience. I can tell that a mile off. Out with it!"

"Later," I say. "At breakfast."

"You old people are so secretive." She busies herself with the cleaning. I go to the window and look out at the snow-covered street. In my mind's eye I see the pitiless Sally walking quickly up it.

I HAVE MY BREAKFAST in the poky little dining-room, covered with flowery paper, on the ground floor. As I descend the stairs the smell of brewing coffee drifts up to meet me. I collect my newspaper from the table in the hall and shuffle into the dining-room, pretending to be absorbed in the headlines. I don't look at the other tenants who all have their heads bent low over their plates. We never greet each other. That is the established practice in this house. I slide as noiselessly as possible into my chair. Herbert Maundy sits next to me. He is a dour, unfriendly man. I don't recall ever having seen him smile. Once or twice I have met him on the street and he betrayed not the smallest sign of recognition. Mrs Maundy describes her son as a "working man." But what Herbert Maundy works at is a mystery to me. Even his mother is reticent about it. All I know is that he leaves the house on a bicycle which, when it is not in use, he keeps carefully covered with a sheet of canvas. However, it is not the unresolved mystery of Herbert's employment which disturbs me. It is his eyes. They are of a mesmeric blue-grey colour—the colour you sometimes see in a thundery sky. Lifeless and yet threatening. Cold eyes

unwarmed by any human sympathy. He never seems to be seeing what is directly in front of him. Those eyes, unbending, inflexible, see only what they choose to see. They have the glazed expression of the blind. But Herbert Maundy is not blind. That is why he frightens me. He invades my nightmares, presiding over them like the Angel of Death. And he frightens not only me, I suspect. I have observed that his mother watches him warily and never speaks a rough or even mildly scolding word to him.

Mrs Maundy is talking about the snow—though to no one in particular. She brings me a tiny glass of orange juice and a rack with three thin slices of cold toast.

"How would you like your eggs this morning, dear?" She invariably calls me "dear" when the other tenants are within earshot.

"Scrambled," I say, without holding out any great hopes.

"If *you* had to scrub the pots and pans you wouldn't want scrambled eggs, you old dear." She twists my ear playfully. "Why don't you have some nice fried eggs instead? I have two keeping warm in the oven and it would be such a waste. . ."

I nod resignedly, giving in to her blackmail. She brings me the two rubbery fried eggs. This is another of the perverse games she likes to play with me. Dangling non-existent choices. She leaves me and starts to fuss around Herbert.

"Is your egg right for you, Herbert dear?"

Herbert is having boiled eggs. For some reason he always has his eggs done differently from the rest of us.

"Yes, mother. They're just right."

"Some more toast?"

"No, thank you, mother. I have quite enough." Herbert slurps his coffee noisily. He is a messy eater. Mrs Maundy doesn't dare complain when he spills things. But if I do I never hear the end of it.

I cannot concentrate on my newspaper this morning. For distraction I turn to the pair of ragged budgerigars perched in their cage on top of a dark-stained chest of drawers. Like those of us sitting at the table, they pay no attention to each other. Passion has long been killed in them. They resemble waxen images. Unfortunate things. You should be wheeling freely through the African jungles—

or wherever it is you come from. What a fate for you to have fallen into the clutches of Mrs Maundy. You should not have let her imprison you like this. I lift my gaze to the photograph of the fluffy white Persian cat hanging on the wall above the cage. The dead blue eyes stare back at me. I am reminded of Herbert and look away. The budgerigars are motionless in their cage. They will probably die soon. Just as well. But how cruel that they should die in captivity. Perhaps you are dreaming of the warmth and freedom of your tropical home. What an indignity for you to die in a cage. Ironically, Mrs Maundy proclaims herself an animal lover. Every year, with loud trumpeting, she sends off a five-pound postal order to the RSPCA and another for three pounds to the Donkey Sanctuary. "The poor dumb creatures," she would say. "I feel so sorry for the poor dumb creatures."

"You haven't touched your food, dear." Mrs Maundy bustles about me. "Waste not, want not. That's my motto."

I have no appetite but, to avoid a lecture, I apply myself with as much enthusiasm as I can summon.

THERE IS A CLATTER of cups and saucers as Herbert bangs his fists on the table and levers himself upright. Though this is an habitual flourish of his, the signature with which he ends every meal, it has never ceased to jar. I sit, tensely expectant, waiting for it to happen. This morning it is particularly bad. My nerves ripple in a radiation of fine, needling pain. The goose pimples rise. My ear drums reverberate with the lingering echo. I shut my eyes, biting on my lower lip.

"So jumpy, dear. So jumpy." Mrs Maundy pats me on the back. She seems to be amused. Bending down confidentially, she whispers, "We will wait till they all clear out, dear. Then you can tell me what's on your mind." However, it is a whisper calculated to carry. The tenants glance up furtively.

Herbert jumps up noisily from his chair, dabbing his lips with a spotted handkerchief. "I'll be off now, mother. See you later." He goes out from the dining-room. Mrs Maundy follows him with her eyes. Herbert's footsteps thud ponderously along the hallway carpet. The front door opens and slams. The walls shake and ornaments rattle. In a sense, I am

glad there is at least one person in the world who frightens Mrs Maundy. I regard it as salutary. Still, that is cold comfort to me. Between the two of them, taunting mother and dead-eyed son, I feel trapped.

One by one the others finish their breakfast and Mrs Maundy removes the dirty plates and glasses, piling them on the draining-board. These successive departures and Mrs Maundy's journeys between dining-room and kitchen are like the swings of a pendulum ticking away the seconds to the doom which is about to devour me. I am seized by panic and try to eat more quickly. The intention is frustrated. Husks of dry toast lodge in my throat and almost succeed in choking me. I cough and splutter.

"I hope you're not dying, dear," Mrs Maundy calls out from the kitchen amid a clinking of cutlery. "Remember our little secret. You're only allowed to die *after* you've told me." She stands in the kitchen doorway and laughs.

The last of the tenants has finished. He rises, bids Mrs Maundy goodbye and departs. I am alone. Alone with Mrs Maundy! She comes in from the kitchen to take away the remaining plates. I struggle to my feet as she does so, pushing my plate aside. The taste of oily egg circulates nauseatingly at the base of my throat.

"Are you *through*?" she asks, staring in disbelief at my plate.

"I'm not very hungry this morning," I manage to say. "My stomach is upset." I hold on to the chair for support. My legs feel unsteady.

"Ungrateful old man," she says. "You don't appreciate what I do for you. You wouldn't get as much as what's left on your plate in most establishments. They will give you a continental breakfast. Have you any idea what a *continental breakfast* is?" She breathes indignantly at me. "What I provide costs me a pretty penny, let me tell you."

Murmuring apologies, I run out of the room. My legs make the decision rather than me. Mrs Maundy pursues me to the foot of the stairs. "Wait!" she cries. "You still haven't told me that little secret of yours."

"I have no secrets," I reply, pausing on the first landing. "I have no secrets at all. . . ."

"It will all come out in the wash, I expect," she says. "Never mind."

What relief courses through me when I finally reach the haven of my own room. I lock the door and collapse against it, fighting to steady my nerves and ward off the nausea. There is a burning tightness in my chest. I listen to see if Mrs Maundy has followed me. But I do not hear that slow, heavy tread. I relax somewhat. I cross to the washbasin and examine my face in the shaving-mirror. How pale and wild and hunted it looks. Not the face of a man in serene old age. I open the window wide and thrust my head outside. The fresh air is reviving and I inhale deeply. The morning is clear and crisp and the blue sky is without a cloud.

It occurs to me I should go for a walk in this lovely weather. It would probably do me good to get out of the house for a bit. To taste once more my dwindling freedom. I dress hurriedly and sneak down the stairs, hoping to avoid Mrs Maundy and her inevitable questions. But, as luck would have it, I stumble on her in the hall.

"I thought you were ill," she says, blocking my passage.

"I'm just going out for a short while," I reply, hating myself for behaving like a prisoner. "To the park. It might clear my head a little." She looks at me in sceptical silence. Then, like a jailer, she makes way reluctantly. She watches me as I open the door and go down the front steps to the street.

"Take care you don't catch a chill," she shouts after me. "At your age that could prove fatal."

THE SUNSHINE has lured many people to the park. After the walk, I am tired. I sit on a bench and try to read the newspaper I have brought with me. A chill wind is blowing. Bloated pigeons peck at the crumbs a woman is scattering on the snowy grass. She laughs ringingly as the pigeons swarm greedily about her feet. Several people are exercising their dogs. In the blue distance beyond the farthest line of trees a mist is forming, shot through by the copper sun. Suddenly I have the absurd notion I am invisible and seeing everything in slow motion. The dogs, the people, the pigeons, the woman's ringing laughter seem unrelated elements of a fantasy in which I have no part. At one moment I am a giant watching

the antics of a pygmy race. At another, I am the pygmy and they are giants and I am terrified of being crushed. I have to remind myself where I am and what I have come there to do. "Only the park," I assure myself repeatedly. "Only the park." I do my utmost to concentrate on the newspaper. The words refuse to yield their sense. They perform a blurring dance on the paper. I try to recall the sound of Mrs Maundy's voice. But that too possesses an alien quality and is soaked up in the hallucinatory sensation. It is as though life itself—not simply *my* life—is ebbing, rushing away from me into a black limbo. But the strangest thing of all is how calm I am. I seem to be standing at a certain remove from myself and noting, with a kind of dispassion, even my own terror. Yes, it is that dispassion which is the strangest thing. I pinch my arm but the skin is numb and I feel no pain. My heart is racing and my head is spinning. What shame, I think, to die in front of these people. Without a name. Without a past. Another body. "Help me!" I want to shout. "I am dying without dignity. You must help me!" The woman with the ringing laughter scuttles towards me. "Can't you see you're scaring away the birds?" Her words are like an antidote. The chaos recedes. The world gradually comes into focus again. I rise from the bench, leave the park and walk slowly back to my room, buffeted by a raw wind.

Mrs Maundy is cleaning the hall. "The return of the prodigal son," she says.

I do not answer her but go straight up to my room. Opening the window, I look out. The snow is melting. On the street the brown slush is furrowed by the tracks of cars. Water drips from the black branches of the chestnut trees. The weather has changed. This swift transformation of the white morning alarms me. Storm clouds flurry across the sky as if propelled by a malevolent god. The grey light is probing and harsh. Then I hear my neighbour opposite.

"You yellow bastards! You yellow bastards!"

I shut my window quickly and turn my back on him. Lying down on the bed, I close my eyes, praying for sleep.

I wake with a start. Someone is in the room. A prowling, hostile presence. "Who is it? Who is there?" I raise my head cautiously

from the pillow. Herbert Maundy is standing over me. He fixes me with his dead, blue-grey eyes. "What do you want with me? I have done nothing to you." He does not reply. His head inclines towards me until I can see only his eyes. They are as menacing and ominous as the sky itself. "I've done nothing to you. If it's the rent your mother sent you for tell her I can pay. I'll find it and pay her in full." He does not answer. I cannot escape the dead eyes of my Angel of Death. "Why can't you speak? Why don't you *ever* speak to me? Say something. Say anything. You shouldn't frighten an old man . . . a dying old man." The awful eyes dim. They grow distant. Herbert vanishes as soundlessly as he came. For a time I lie there, unable to move. The room is cold and dark. It is late. Soon I will be called to account. The wallet . . . the wallet. . . .

I dash to the wardrobe and frenziedly ransack the pockets of my coat, my three pairs of trousers, my two jackets. Nothing. I drag a chair over and, hauling myself on to it, sweep my hands across the top of the wardrobe. Nothing. I fall on my knees and thrust my hands into the gap between it and the wall. I insert my arm as far as it will go. Nothing. Nothing but cobwebs and dust. Still on my knees, I crawl over every inch of the floor. Nothing. I lie flat on my stomach and grope under the bed. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. If only I had some evidence one way or the other. The wine bottle for instance. I start to cry.

"What *are* you doing down there?" Mrs Maundy has made one of her silent invasions.

Why can't you leave me in peace, I want to say. Why can't you and your son leave an old man in peace. This is my room. I have always managed to pay the rent for it. Surely I can do what I like in here. On my patch of earth.

"I was hunting for my shoes," I say. "I can't seem to find them anywhere." I haul myself effortfully to my feet.

She has that queer look again.

"What is it?" I ask. "What are you looking at me like that for?"

"If you want to find your shoes it might help if you switch on the light," she replies. She flicks the switch.

The light. I had not realised. And it is cold too. I had forgotten how cold it was. Clasp my arms about me, I shiver.

"I came up to see you earlier," she says. "But you were asleep."

"Asleep . . . yes, yes, I was asleep." I do not look at her.

"Since you haven't had any lunch," she says, "I thought I would ask you to have some tea with me. You must be hungry."

"Tea," I repeat stupidly. "You want me to have tea with you."

"I've baked a lovely cake." She smiles cheerfully. "With nuts and raisins."

I fight my surging anguish. "I'll be down in a minute," I mutter. "Just let me find my shoes and I'll be down."

She points to the floor near the foot of the bed. "There they are," she says, not troubling to conceal her amusement. "Now don't be long." She wags her finger at me and goes, not closing the door.

TEA INDEED! A lovely cake with nuts and raisins! I am too well acquainted with Mrs Maundy's little tricks to be taken in by these blandishments. She is planning one of her perverse games with me. I don't believe for a minute she is concerned about my hunger. Anyway, I am not hungry. Her acts of "kindness" do not fool me. Their purpose is clear enough. To fox me. To throw me off my guard. I remember the day, some months ago, when, out of the blue, she came up here and presented me with a book of crossword puzzles. "To keep your mind occupied," she said. "It's bad for old people to get bored. The Devil always finds mischief for idle hands." But then, like now, it wasn't genuine concern for my well-being that prompted her. Not at all. Her joy consisted in watching the confusion into which this act of apparent generosity threw me. Her invitation to tea isn't very different. She knows something is wrong and, most probably, she knows it is to do with the rent. Mrs Maundy can sniff these things out. She is an extremely clever and observant woman. However, she won't come right out and say so. That isn't her style. She must have her fun first. Play cat and mouse with me. And only when she has wearied of the amusement will the trap be sprung without further ceremony. "Yoo hoo up there! What are you doing?" Mrs Maundy's strident tones drift up from the hallway. "The tea will be undrinkable if you don't come down straight away."

"Coming! Coming!" I shout back. I try to make myself as decent as I can as quickly as I can. My fingers are fumbling and awkward and my palms are moist. I feel feverish. The journey down the stairs is like the journey of a condemned man to the scaffold. Mrs Maundy is waiting for me in the hall.

"Ah! There you are at last, you old dawdler." She hustles me into the sitting-room. Two arm-chairs are drawn up in front of the small, brown-tiled fireplace. The banked-up coals glow orange in the grate. A round table on spindly legs is placed between the chairs. I see the virgin cake, the teapot sheathed with its woollen cap, two cups and two saucers, a shining knife. They are arrayed like the instruments of my impending execution. The room is crowded with furniture. I sink down in one of the arm-chairs and gaze at the fire. My doom sounds faintly in my ears like the crash of distant but approaching thunder. Mrs Maundy, chattering gaily, pours the tea and cuts meagre slices of the cake.

"Isn't this nice and cosy? After a hard day's work to relax in front of a cheerful fire with a cup of tea." With a self-satisfied grunt, Mrs Maundy settles herself into the chair beside me. The springs creak. She sighs. "It's so good to be able to put your feet up at the end of a hard day." She glances at me out of the corner of her eyes. "But I don't suppose you know what bliss it is. I mean, having nothing to do all day you wouldn't appreciate it."

I remain silent, staring at the fire.

"Just think how lucky you are," she adds. "All you have to worry about is paying the rent. That apart. . . ." She waves her hand.

On the mantelpiece, occupying pride of place, is a photograph in a gilt frame of a bland, smooth-featured man, probably in his thirties. I grasp at this straw. "Mr Maundy?"

"No," she replies shortly. "That is a friend of mine. He died during the war. I married Mr Maundy just after the war." "After" is spoken pointedly. "He was in the Merchant Navy. His ship got torpedoed."

I do not say anything. She seems irritated and speaks with a mixture of harshness and indifference.

"I've never been beyond these shores and never wanted to," she says. "I was happy to stay at home. But he—he was a great

traveller." Her eyes rest briefly and lovelessly on the photograph. Is she praising him? Or is she cursing him? I cannot make it out. Her tone is impenetrable. "They finally got him though." She speaks almost with triumph. "Whoosh! Through the water it went." Her arm dives towards the fire. "Whoosh! A direct hit. And that was that." She blinks reproachfully at me. "You're not eating your cake. Is your stomach still upset?" She grins slyly at me.

I nibble at the edges of the yellow slice she has rested on my saucer. She watches me intently. Any moment now, I think. It will happen at any moment. The front door opens and closes with a bang. The house shudders.

"That will be Herbert," says she absently.

I LISTEN to Herbert's ponderous footsteps thudding on the carpet and ascending the stairs to his room.

"I wonder what it feels like to drown," she says. "To know you're going under with no hope of rescue—like my friend must have done. To have the water closing about you. Unable to breathe. Sinking deeper and deeper." She is all harshness now. Herbert moves noisily overhead. "Which is the worst way to die? By water? By fire?"

How mercilessly she taunts me.

"Are you afraid of dying?" She bites into her slice of cake and chews methodically.

"I try not to think about it too much." My palms are moist. The thunder rolls nearer.

"Don't you now?" She arranges herself more comfortably. "But you should prepare yourself. My friend wasn't prepared. But Mr Maundy was. I saw to that. And I tell you the same things I told him. I keep telling you. . . ."

"I know you do," I answer, turning towards her. "You torture me with it."

"Torture you, do I?" She seems mildly astonished. She laughs. "What an odd fellow you are. I try to help you and you call it torture."

"Yes. You brought me down here in order to torture me at your ease. While putting your feet up. . . ." Again I have that strange feeling of dispassion. I jump up from the chair. The thunder rolls and crashes deafeningly about me, one with Herbert Maundy's resounding footfalls. "You brought me down here to

play cat and mouse with me. But I won't allow it."

"Cat and mouse!" She shakes with laughter.

"If you know I can't pay my rent, why don't you say so straight out? Get it over with instead of. . ."

"So," she says, "now we have it. From your own lips. I said it would all come out in the wash, didn't I?" She wags her finger at me. "You've squandered all your money in the pub and now you can't pay your rent. You're begging for my charity."

"Never! Never would I beg for your charity. That would be a fate worse than death by drowning and fire put together."

"You ungrateful old man! After all I've done for you. . . ." She is shouting at me.

"Don't you dare shout at me." I am standing by her chair. A raging, black cloud envelops me. "You're quite right. I squandered my money. Every last penny of it. And I'll even tell you what I squandered it on. *Who* I squandered it on. I spent it all on a woman. . . ."

"You liar!" Mrs Maundy is not smiling now. She rises from her chair. "What woman would so much as look at you? You—you with one foot already in the grave. . . ."

"I spent every last penny I possessed on a woman I picked up in the pub. On a woman of the streets. A common whore!"

She stares at me with speechless venom.

"I brought this common whore back to your house. Back to *your* respectable house! And . . . and I. . . ."

"Your brain is rotting," she says. "You lost your money. Your wallet. I found it out in the hall. Lying there. . . ."

She wants to make me believe it's a dream. She has invented another of her perverse games. But I will not be cheated. I cannot be cheated like this. "Show me! But you can't show me. I won't be taken in by your tricks any more."

"You're mad," she says. "Mad! I'm going to let them come and cart you away."

She retreats as I advance on her. But she cannot go very far. Not in this small room crowded with furniture. She cowers against a table. I bring my face close to hers. "A common whore entered your house, Mrs Maundy. Smelling of rotting roses!"

Mrs Maundy has such a comical expression. She is babbling away. What a commotion there is on the stairs. I have never been able to cope with hysterical women. Herbert is bearing down straight towards me with those awful eyes of his starting out of his head. Mrs Maundy lies limp in my arms. Not me, Herbert. Not me. I'm not the one in need of attention. You are making a big mistake. It's your mother you should be tending, Herbert. But what is the good? He never sees what is in front of him. Why is he pinioning me like this? What have I done? All I can see is my Angel of Death with the dead blue-grey eyes. They are the colour of the pitiless sky itself. If Mrs Maundy would let me sleep, if only she would let me sleep, my nightmares would, I am sure, vanish into thin air.

Janet and Mark & the New Illiteracy

Reading and the Emotions

THE EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES interfering with learning in school have so many and varied causes that it is difficult to break them down into simple categories. Still, it might be useful to consider separately those psychological blocks to learning which originate in the child's life outside school, mainly in his experiences in the home and with his parents, and those others which are created by the child's school experience. Since educators can remedy the psychological difficulties which come from the child's past only to a limited degree—although if we are aware of their nature we can do quite a bit to ameliorate the situation—I shall concentrate on the question of whether our teaching in class is conducive to promoting or interfering with the child's ability to learn.

In order for a child to desire to learn to read a certain atmosphere needs to be created which is favourable to that concentration and contemplation which makes the reading experience fruitful. It is easy to say that the triteness of the stories in our primers destroys any possibility that reading as such could be viewed as a worthwhile experience. And I will try to illustrate why these stories, instead of turning children toward reading, turn them off. Here I would like to suggest what atmosphere, what emotional climate in regard to books these primers create. One of the best known and most widely used series are the old *Dick and Jane* books, now renamed *Janet and Mark*.¹

The first two pages show these two children with their names printed under the picture. Janet is shown tending a tomato plant, Mark is raking grass. I do not know why it is thought that these activities make an appeal or should be helpful to children who are supposed to learn to read from

this book; these pictures certainly do not suggest reading as a meaningful activity, rather some other employment of one's time. No normal first-grader I know enjoys raking grass, or mowing it, and only a few girls of this age are enamoured with tending tomato plants.

Let me compare this with a rather randomly selected first reader from one of the countries behind the Iron Curtain, or what used to be called so. It happens to be a book from which recent generations of Polish children learned to read.² The first pages are without text, just pictures. The front of the book shows two groups of children sitting under a big tree, reading books with clearly visible expressions of pleasure. The same theme appears in the book's first page: a bookstand, in front of which children and adults of various ages stand or sit, reading books with obvious signs of concentration or enjoyment. Some read by themselves, others together. The next two pages show two different homes: one a city apartment, the other a farmhouse. In each a child—in one a girl, in the other a boy—takes leave from their mother to go to school. The next two pictures show each of these children on their way to school, meeting friends who are headed the same way. The sixth full-page picture shows these two children with their friends entering the schoolyard. This is followed by a picture showing the children, now with the help of their teacher, taking off their coats and hanging them up, getting ready for class. The eighth picture without words shows the teacher in front of her class, teaching reading; the children are in their chairs, their books open, showing interested attention. I do not think it is necessary to spell out the contrast in atmosphere created by these silent pictures when compared with that created in our Western readers. Just one more example. A typical Soviet Russian primer shows the children walking to school on

¹ Harper & Row, New York, 1966.

² M. Falski, *Elementarz* (Warsaw, 1961).

the first day of class with flowers in their hands, to celebrate the big event.³

IT WILL NOT COME AS A SURPRISE that the readers in communistic countries soon show parents at work in factories, while our readers show them only in free-time activities. Another significant detail should be mentioned. The boy and girl in the Polish reader come from very different families, which makes sense as they are of the same age, and not twins. Now Mark and Janet, as much as their ancient counterparts, Dick and Jane, who are of the same age do not look at all alike, although they have the same parents. Any child who is serious about what he reads cannot help wonder: how is it that these two different-looking children of the same age have the same parents? Are they both adopted, or one of them? Are they each a child of previously divorced parents? True, they could be non-identical twins; but if so, should that important fact not be told? And why start our young readers with the demand that they should see themselves in twins who are not twins?

It is one example of how, throughout our readers, the child is not expected to think about what is presented to him. As much as these twins who are not twins do not make sense, so the climate which is created is that learning to read does not make sense, because what it presents offends the reader's intelligence.

DURING THE PAST YEAR I spent a considerable amount of time with children in schools which are considered unusually good, vastly superior to the average school, and where quite a few of the children come from better than average homes. I concentrated on the first grades, since there over-all patterns are formed, particularly the psychological attitudes towards school and learning. Rather than present my own observations—which suggest to me that many of these children received the impression that non-academic things are much more important in the

value hierarchy of their teachers—I would like to report some spontaneous reactions of a group of bright fourth- and fifth-graders when I discussed with them their recollections on how they reacted to being taught reading in first grade.

One readily admitted that though he now liked reading, he still had a hard time reading aloud. The reason was that when in first grade he was asked to read aloud, he felt so ashamed to say such stupid things that he blocked; he simply could not do it; and henceforth he resented reading, preferring to do anything else in class.

Another hated the stories he had to read because these were neither realistic nor fantastic. Stories, he thought, should either give a picture of what life was really like, or not pretend to do so. He would have had a much easier time learning to read, and enjoying it, had the stories been either true to life, describing how people really are, or truly fantastic, like fairy tales. He told me that he finally overcame his resentment of reading when he began to become acquainted with fairy tales, because then after he had read a story, he would contemplate its content "for a long while." These were meaningful experiences for him; those he read in class were not.

When I asked in what sense the stories from which these children had learned to read were not "true to life", every one of the group was eager to talk, and each had some different objection. One was that in these stories there are only two age-groups: children of their own age, and adults, mostly parents; and both children and parents alike are depicted as insipid. But they wanted to see and read also stories about teenagers, and about old people. Another universal objection was that nobody in these stories showed their true feelings, such as being angry. Other complaints of these ten-year-olds were that there was no reason to learn to read that they could make out, because in the early grades they never learned anything through reading that they didn't already know, and knew much better and in greater detail than it was set out in the books from which they were supposed to learn great things.

I WOULD LIKE now to juxtapose to these recollections early memories of three boys who felt that their first experiences with learning to read had formed their lives.⁴ One became a scholar; the other a famous author; and the third feeble-minded (and this despite a potential IQ of over 180). Interestingly enough, the first two were

³ *Alphabet* (Ministry of Education, Enlightenment Publication; Moscow, 1965). *Companion of Alphabet* (1972).

⁴ H. N. Bialik, L. R. Mendelsohn, and a former patient of the Orthogenic School who for reasons of confidentiality must remain nameless. See: L. R. Mendelsohn, "Sophisticated Reading for Children: The Experience of the Classical Jewish Academy" in *Children's Literature: The Great Excluded*, and F. Butler, ed. *Journal of the Modern Language Association* (Seminar on Children's Literature) (Storrs, Connecticut, 1973).

introduced to reading in orthodox Jewish schools, where the books from which these four-and-five-year-olds were taught were the Bible and the Talmud. One, the scholar, was deeply impressed with the fact, which he soon realised, that the meaning of the first words he learned to read—the opening sentences of the Bible—was so great and varied, so inexhaustible, that even his teacher, who had read the same text innumerable times, always found something in them of which he had previously not been aware. Through the text and his teacher's attitude towards it, in his very first lessons the magic of reading, and of literature, was opened up to this boy. I do not need to pose the question of what vistas are opened up to the child as reward for having become able to read: "See Spot Run, See Spot Jump."⁵

Bialik, my second example, responded not so much to the deep significance which the reading matter had for his teacher, but to his teacher's understanding and appreciation of the magic meaning which letters and words had for him as a little boy. In *Aftergrowth and Other Stories* (Philadelphia, 1939) Bialik reflects on his first experience with learning to read:

"To tell the truth all they had to teach reached me only behind my ear, so to say, through the left earlock, as folks say in Yiddish. My right ear was busy listening to quite a different subject which rose from the prayer book between the lines, and united with what was already within my heart. The lines themselves, and the actual letters which made up those lines, were only faint intimations of this

other wisdom. From the first day on which the teacher showed me the letters of the *aleph-beth* [these and the following are the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet] set in rows, I saw leaping forth the measured ranks of soldiers like those who at times passed in front of our house, with their drummer, rattling tum tararum tum, at their head. Those that most resembled this were the *alephs*, all arms swinging and legs striding, and the *gimels* with their boot moving off to the left, particularly when they had the *kubbutz* vowel beneath them, its three dots like a ladder. . . . My eyes began to search the sides and flanks of the book. "Whom are you looking for?" asked the melamed (teacher). "For the drummer," said I, my eyes searching. . . .

All day long I daydreamed about armies and soldiers. . . .

When I reached the point of combining letters, I found a vast medley of weird creatures; they came in bands, back to back, the simple *nun* and the squash-nosed *pe* always jumping ahead on one leg. The *lamed* strode erect with outstretched neck. . . .

With such learning we can readily understand that it became unnecessary to translate the words; translation was almost a defect. The words poured out and out from the heart, their meaning being part of them. . . .

Out of the blurred little letters in these old books, all those book-bits which I learned in turn, with great jumps—out of all of these there came towards me confused and incomplete fragments of generations, tales and stories. . . . Here I was, conversing with all these

ancients, and participating in their life and deeds. . . . In a pinch, one of these ancient wise men would come and make a remark, and everything would clear up beautifully and happily.

To show that not just traditional Hebrew teaching was based on the deepest meaning which literature can have, let me quote the first sentences of the New England Primer of 1727. In those olden days the first words a child learned to read were: "*In Adam's fall—We sinned all—Thy life to mend—This book attend.*" There could be no doubt in the child's mind that learning to



BRUNO BETTELHEIM

⁵ That the dog in this Harper & Row series has now become "Socks", a most unlikely name for a dog, does not help matters a bit.

read had to do with the first and last things: with our human condition, as symbolised by the fall from grace, and the hope for salvation. If only we learned to read this book, we could mend our life and earn eternal bliss. With such promises held out to the child, learning to read despite difficulties surely appeared to be the most worthwhile thing anybody could do.

TO MANY MODERN EDUCATORS it may seem far-fetched that learning to read, which they view as a most rational undertaking, a typical cognitive, an ego achievement, can be mastered well only if at first and for quite some time to come it is experienced as a most powerful magic, as it was for the two five-year-old Hebrew scholars as much as for the child of 1727.

Only if learning to read is viewed as the best or only way to gain access to this magic power, does the child's unconscious support his conscious efforts, does the id lend its great sources of energy to the as yet weak ego so that it becomes able to master this difficult task, from which it expects immediate gains for its magic and wishful fantasies. This magic interpretation of the power reading confers is further supported by the superego, because as this particular magic becomes effective it also seems to serve a superior power—in my examples, that of religion, which controls human existence. Hence the magic interpretation of reading is lent further credence by the superego's supporting with its strength and approbation efforts at learning to read. Without such unconscious support on the part of the id and superego, learning to read remains a most difficult task, one that gives little pleasure, and a skill that is apt to fall soon into disuse.

This is so much so, that I believe that we wouldn't be communicating as writer and reader if our common undertaking at this moment was fed only by rational sources. To be sure, I believe what we are here engaged in is ego-correct, but it receives its emotional impetus, its zest, because at least my superego strongly approves of what I am doing at this moment—all the sceptical voices of my ego are not able to silence its pressure, because otherwise I would not dare to go on. Again, contrary to my ego which knows better, my id fools me into believing that what I say is of some interest to you, where without the support of such wishful id thinking, I also would have ceased and desisted long ago. In short, I believe interest in reading—as in all other cognitive

intellectual endeavours, however much the content may be selected realistically and intelligently with regard to ego needs—gains its emotional fervour only from id and superego, even in my case (though you may remain convinced that they do not need such irrational support to go on with this scientific investigation).

Much of education is a repetition of the history of the race. The conviction of Freud and others that ontogeny repeats phylogeny is another psychoanalytic tenet which modern education has discarded much to its detriment. Had it not, it would apply it to learning to read. Literacy, man's great achievement, began as sheer magic, and was not created to serve utilitarian purposes. But modern education stresses only utility and "getting ahead", thus robbing learning to read of the greatest incentive which could support it. When script developed, it served religious and magical needs, so much so that, as used to be well known, it is written that the word was with God, and the word was God. But for millennia before this was uttered, writing and reading were an arcane art which conferred special powers and privileges. Consider the long struggle as to whether the average man should be permitted to read Scriptures, and consider too that it was from the Good Book that children learned to read; furthermore, only after man was permitted to read Scriptures, did education to read become universal.

ALL CHILDREN ARE fascinated by secret language, and the beginning of school age is the time when the child is most desirous to partake of the secrets of adults. Satisfaction of both these desires was contained in what these boys were taught, and that is why they learned it so well. The close connection between id-motivated fascination with magic and secret language, superego-motivated interest in religion, and ego-motivated book-learning creates a devotion to reading and learning in general, which then can be easily transferred to all learning.

How much even today reading must be supported by superego representations and id desires in order to be well learned and used, is shown by the fact that it is the parental high valuation which makes it so attractive to the child. And this attractiveness does not come from the rational and utilitarian purposes out of which parents may devote themselves to reading. What the child responds to is the parents' emotional absorption in reading, what makes it attractive

to him is that it seems to fascinate the parents. It is their secret knowledge which the child wants to be able to share. The more the parental devotion to reading and the child's belief in its magic propensities coincide, the easier a time will the child have in learning to read. Unfortunately our teaching of reading has become far removed from the time when its mastery was directly related to teaching about the dangers of perdition and the way to salvation, as even the 19th-century MacGuffey readers still did, and as most fairy stories make an appeal to both the id and superego, while showing ego ways to meet their and the ego's rational goals. That is why many children, though they have the requisite intelligence to learn how to read well, fail to do so; and even if they learn it, emotionally it remains meaningless to them, and hence is little used later on. The reason is that when they first learned it, when the reading habits were formed which will later dominate, reading was not supported by the powerful magic connotations which led to involvement of the unconscious in it, nor by the support of the superego and its external representations. In short, because reading was for them deprived of magic, it was experienced as trivial, hardly worth their while.

True, later on the irrational aspects of this magic support need to be reduced and the rational ones must gain ascendancy. But if such divestment of magic occurs too soon, and too radically, reading will not be strongly invested emotionally.

As a matter of fact, because of its educational centrality, reading should be the paramount example of what education in the deepest sense is all about, and thus influence all learning: a progress from irrationality to rationality, originating in id's purposes, but subjected to superego control, and ego scrutiny, so as to be changed to meet in rational ways the demands of reality. Learning then also selectively satisfies those id and superego demands which rationally can be met, and thus enriches the total personality, adding to its well-being as it does for its human environment. Modern education, wishing to start out with the end product, believing it can do away with slow and tortuous development, ends up producing an ego so depleted of its natural resources in meeting its tasks that it remains weak for the rest of its life.

I NOW RETURN to my third example, the boy with the intelligence of a genius who failed first grade

several times, unable to read. He was brilliant; but, as far as his academic performance was concerned, feeble-minded. Years later, when through our efforts his intellectual blocking had lifted, he decided to teach himself to read from a book that explained how man developed the alphabet, a book for adults. (O. Ogg, *The Twenty-Six Letters*, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell, 1948). When he was able to read, he explained why he had so determinedly resisted it. Both his parents had higher university degrees, intellectual achievement was terribly important to them, and they pushed it at the boy at the expense of his emotional life, which remained barren. When he entered school he had hopes that these things would be different, that these developing his intellect would not have to proceed at the expense of his emotional life. And so it seemed at the beginning. He liked his first-grade teacher; she seemed "a warm person." But when she, on whom he had rested his hope, waxed all excited about the stupidities of "See Spot Run", this meant to him that there was no hope ever to combine true emotions with intellectual activities. Reading, or rather what he was told he had to master to be able to read, was simply so asinine that he could not commit his emotions to it. The only way out was to retire entirely into an inner fantasy life which excluded all reality—because at home reality was devoid of the feelings he needed for survival, and at school there were emotions, but so misplaced and perverted that the experience was an insult to his intelligence.

WHAT PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTELLATION is, then, necessary for the intellect and the emotions to work together to promote an interest in learning; in this case, learning to read? Repeating what has been said so far, and putting it in the simplest possible way, I suggest that learning, particularly learning to read, must make a powerful appeal to our unconscious, both the id and the superego, in order that the energy of these two institutions of the mind empowers the ego to meet successfully the cognitive tasks presented to it.

It is well known that all superego appeals have been eliminated from our educational readers—quite contrary to what is true, for example, of the readers in Communist countries which abound with superego appeals. Appeals to the id are plentiful in our readers, much more so than in readers in the Communist world, but un-

fortunately these are all of the wrong type. Unlike the experience of the young Hebrew scholars, no secrets whose mastery would provide magic powers are part of our readers. The appeal is to the most basic and unstructured instinctual tendencies. Most of all these appeals are of a locomotoric nature. It is difficult enough for a first-grader to sit still and pay attention—and much more so for those whose social background is culturally deprived. But it becomes an insult to his feelings if he is asked to sit still when he is at the same time required to think only of romping and running and jumping and all other varieties of active play. It turns the child as effectively off the cognitive task of reading as did the contradiction with which the young genius was confronted when emotional experiences were offered to him which were devoid of any intellectual content.

It is unfair to use one or the other basic American reader as an example, because all which are widely used in the U.S.A are equally bad in this respect. But since I am not able to make my point without examples, two may be presented. The *First Pre-primer* of the "Harper & Row Basic Reading Program" which is the text used in California, the most populous state in the Union, as well as in many other states, begins:

"Janet and Mark.—Come Mark. Come, Mark come—Come here, Mark.—Come here, come here, Mark.—Come and jump. Come and jump, jump, jump.—Here I come, Janet. Here I come. I can ride my bike. I can, I can. I can ride and ride. —Here I go, Janet, here I go."

And so on. The verbs predominantly used are those signifying a vigorous motor activity.

A typical example of the frustrations of his motoric desires which the child is subjected to, since these are aroused by the text while he must sit still, can be found in the "ITA Initial Training Alphabet". In a story called "Jumping," it goes:

"If a boy likes to jump; he jumps over, and into" and on. He jumps over a fence and into a puddle and into a bed and into trouble. He jumps into a pool, over some rocks, out of school, into a box. If a boy jumps, he jumps with a shout, and makes girls jump too, because he yells 'Yippee, hy you! Boys jump! Girls jump! You jump too!'"

Is it a mere Freudian slip which gives unconscious motives away? In their initial learning experiences these children are encouraged to think of jumping out of school. Yet another example from these series will illustrate that it is not a chance, or a single instance, for these reading texts to suggest to the child that the best thing he can do in school is to try to jump out of

it. Either directly, or indirectly, or by implication, the readers powerfully suggest that school is best avoided. Not only school, but all of life is depicted as a row of tedious and senseless activities, and another story in the same series makes this clear. It goes as follows:

"In the morning you get up. You get dressed. You get breakfast. Even if you get wet you go to school on time. Then you get out of school and you go home again. After a day of getting up and getting dressed and getting breakfast, and getting wet, and getting to school, and getting out of school, and getting hot, and getting home and getting dinner, you get very tired and get into bed, so that you can get up the next morning and start all over again."

I cannot imagine a more depressing view of life than is here depicted; nor is there any single suggestion that something meaningful may go on in school.

READERS IN COMMUNIST countries direct the child's attention repeatedly to the importance of what goes on in class. By contrast, our readers abound in stories which deliberately and consistently direct the child's attention away from school towards after-school activities. One example from the ITA series called *School Days* may serve to illustrate this point. I sense a certain irony in the title, since it has nothing favourable to tell about them. It begins:

"Bill lives in this house. Today is Monday. It is a hot sunny day. [I suppose the day is hot and sunny in order to make going to school even less attractive.] Bill goes to school. Bill rides to school on the bus. What can Bill do after school? After school Bill can fish. Bess lives here. Today is Tuesday. It is a sunny day. Bess goes to this school. What can Bess do after school? After school Bess can ride. [The picture shows her riding a horse.] Al lives in this apartment house. Today is Wednesday. It is a windy day. Al goes to school. Al rides a bike to school. What can Al do after school? After school Al can run and play. Pat lives in this apartment house. Liz lives here, too. Today is Thursday. Pat and Liz go to school here. What can Pat and Liz do after school? After school today Pat and Liz can play house. This is Ted's house. Today is Friday. It is cold and windy. It is snowing today. Ted goes to school. Ted rides on the school bus. After school today Ted can ride a sled. What can you do after school today?"

This, the child is taught, is what gives meaning to school days.

Things are not much different in other readers. For example, in the Bank Street series is a story called "People Read", from which one might assume that here the importance and benefits of reading will be presented. Far from it. While in the story people are shown reading, there is no

indication of why this would benefit anybody. The title picture (a two-page spread) has as its most impressive central figure a huge STOP sign. Other signs on this page indicate other prohibitions, such as "No Parking" etc. Only one out of the six signs which form this picture is not a reference to an inhibition, and this is supposed to encourage children to learn to read. Thus, while the other stories set the child against learning to read because he is asked to think of all other types of pleasurable activities while nowhere are the benefits or enjoyment of reading mentioned, here—where the book for once speaks of reading—great efforts have been made to make it clear to the child that when he reads, what he reads will be inhibitions. And the value of literacy is not to fetter but to free the mind. But we should not be too hard on these books because no attempt is made to stress the liberating aspects of reading. Since the mind as such has no place in them, how could they address themselves to freeing the mind?

Appropriately the most impressive story in the same Pre-primer (it is the next-to-the-last one) suggests that life is nothing but a big cheat. In it children run—do our American primers want children to think of anything but running?—in order to get to a fire. When they arrive, the conflagration turns out to have been hardly worth mentioning, much less running for, and so the story ends with the sarcastic remark "What a fire. . . ."

I HAVE ALREADY mentioned the absence of verbs which would direct the child's attention to schoolwork, or any other serious activities. I should also add that some of the most frequently used admonitions are those children of primary age hate with a vengeance. They hate the familiar parental order: "Come here." Yet this is what the stories in these readers ask them to do. Children hate to be asked whether they see what is in front of their eyes; it implies that they are stupid. Yet apart from "Come here" the most frequent admonition used is to see something, such as an automobile or a train engine, obviously because these are such small objects that a normal child is apt to overlook them if his attention is not specifically directed towards observing them.

These examples from the very early schooldays

of learning-to-read may suggest the contributions which our method of teaching has been making to children's emotional difficulties in mastering the academic task on which all other learning is based. I want now to summarise a number of other psychological difficulties which interfere with the ability to learn in school: those which originate from the home environment.

It is well known that the emotionally troubled child has difficulty in learning and paying attention in class. Not so widely known is that it also works the other way round—that not achieving in school is closely linked to emotional disturbance.

Some fifteen years ago, an all-too-neglected study has shown how intimate this connection really is. In a research project of the U.S. Public Health Service it was soon found that those adolescents who exhibited chronic anti-social behaviour were also poor readers. So to study this phenomenon more accurately, an entire school population of 45,000 children was observed over several years. In this way it was possible to locate all children who showed low reading achievement; it was a sizable group, since 16% of all fifth-graders were reading below third-grade level. (As always, more boys than girls were thus retarded.)⁶

A year later, among the now sixth-grade students, the relative reading stage of each child remained remarkably constant. But when the same group was re-studied two years later, in the eighth grade, nearly all who were retarded readers in the fifth and sixth grades now exhibited serious social problems as well. Thus educational malfunctioning—of which reading disturbance is the most characteristic form—is a first sign of emotional disturbance. Incidentally, if such academic difficulties were due to lack of intelligence, they would not so uniformly be followed by severe emotional difficulties.

FROM MY EXPERIENCE with emotionally disturbed youngsters, it is my conviction that although reading difficulties show up earlier than severe emotional disturbances (as disclosed in this official American study), as far as causation goes it is actually the other way around. The severely disturbed child (of normal intellectual endowment) will have serious trouble learning to read; and his inability to read stems from the same emotional problems which, in a few years, may break out into grave asocial behaviour.

Where emotional disturbance exists in the small child, and his parents are unable or unwilling

⁶ A. D. Miller, "The role of the school system in a mental health program," *Orthopsychiatry and the School* (New York, 1958), pp. 135ff.

ling to recognise it, the disturbance goes unheeded until the child reaches school. There he is singled out: not because the teacher always recognises the presence of mental disturbance, but because of academic malfunctioning.

This makes it doubly important to consider how learning to read could be used to help the child master the emotional complications which he brings to school from his home background. In principle this is simple; in practice it is quite difficult. The principle is to convince the child that reading will help him with his psychological difficulties. To do so we have to show him that reading helps him with what concerns him most deeply. When we do that, we discover that even children who for years had resisted learning even the simplest words, had been unable to read from primers that pictured life in a single colour—as all sweetness and light when their world was evidently so drab and unhappy—that even these children were suddenly eager to read. Some of them who, for years, had not learned to read a single word, then learned to recognise, read, and spell a hundred words or more in a few weeks' time.

When we felt they were ready for it—that is, when we felt that the resentment of learning built up through previous school experience had waned—we introduced to them the idea (in a short talk, and in language they could understand) that what is hardest to do, and the biggest problem in learning and living, but at the same time the most important one, is to master one's own "scary" ideas. Learning words that help us make distinctions—to distinguish what we are afraid of, from what we only think about—could be of the greatest help. Because while "scary" events that really and truly happen are overpowering, merely thinking about them, or talking and reading about them, need not be; and in this way we can come to understand and learn to deal with them.

After such an explanation, three of our children picked the first words they wanted to learn: "*scary*," "*fire*," and "*hit*." To me it seems that in these three words our children, without knowing it, outlined a course on how to deal with aggression, at least in the classroom-learning situation. One word, "*hit*", deals with animate aggression; the second, "*fire*", with inanimate destruction; and the third, "*scary*", with the consequences of aggression and destruction. If we permit them to state their aggressive tendencies, they can also come to recognise their "scary" character, and

only this kind of recognition can lead to something better than denial and suppression. It can bring the conviction that in self-protection (and to avoid scary experiences) one must deal in constructive ways with the tendency to violence, both one's own and that of others.

A SAMPLE OF THE EMOTIONALLY CHARGED words such children usually learn to read after seeing once, and learn to spell and write after a few repetitions: *fire, knife, cut, crash, shoot, kill, hit, bite, teeth, cry, fight, jail, scream, yell*. Consider how much aggression they reveal, and the desire to learn about it. And compare these with what are generally considered easy words to learn.

Each of these children selected different words because what was emotionally significant for one was not so to the others. The interesting thing is that all children learned emotionally charged words, even ones not too meaningful to them, when they saw that they were charged words for another child. They shared not only learning but each other's emotions as well.

As we developed our method we realised that charged (or "scary") words sometimes aroused too much emotion. We then devised many categories, only five of which I shall mention: scary words; not-nice words; nice words; warm words; and cold words. The nice words the American children selected include things like Kool-Ade, orange juice, milk, play, and hot dog. And they tell us what experiences the children think are needed to counterbalance violence. In view of the fact that most primers concentrate on what we would call "nice words", it might also be of interest that the children learn the "not-nice" and "scary" words much faster and more permanently.

I HAVE CONSIDERED AT SOME length how the methods of our schools make reading seem nonsensical to the child and hence turn him off—unless because of his background he is so deeply committed to learning that even our shabby methods do not deflect him from his purposes. I would like to conclude with an example illustrating that when taught soundly (that is, in line with the child's emotional needs) it can be exactly the experience of reading which turns him on again. It also illustrates that only if a child becomes active in his own behalf in reading will it be a deeply meaningful experience to him.

A girl had a deplorable home background. She

had been much abused by her parents. She acted feeble-mindedly and refused to be involved in any learning task. Because of her teacher's entreaties she was willing to remain in class, occupying herself with all types of things, provided these had nothing to do with learning. But she could not help hearing what went on around her. One day when the other children were again reading stories about happy families and how good and charming parents were, the teacher sat down with the girl and spoke about how upsetting it must be to hear all these stories about good homes, when her experience had been so radically different. Using the child's language, she suggested that it would be high time to teach a lesson to these people who write such stories and expect children to learn to read from them. How would she like to correct such a book (it happened to be a reading text of some forty pages) by taking all parents out of them, by blotting out with a heavy black marker the words "*father*" and "*mother*" whenever these appeared on the pages of the book. The girl seemed completely uninterested. The teacher, undaunted, proceeded with her own marker to blot out these words on page after page. By the fourth page the girl

appeared interested and amused. The teacher continued a little longer and by the sixth page asked the girl whether she would continue to do the same throughout the book. This non-reader who could not recognise a single word—or so she had maintained—now proceeded systematically and faultlessly to blot out "*father*" and "*mother*" on the following thirty-odd pages. When she was through and had thus made the book fit her psychological needs, the teacher asked her whether she now might try to read this rather advanced text. The girl proceeded to do so with scarcely an error.

A last point. Some might think it would have done to let the child dictate her own story in order to learn to read from it—but this had been tried and failed. The reason was that what activated her was doing something negative about the world. The requests to do something positive, such as dictating a story, proved fruitless. The bad in her life had replaced—indeed had blotted out—the good. Only after she herself had blotted out the bad, only after reading had offered her the chance to do so, did it attain meaning for her; and hence it was fairly easily mastered. Happy ends are sometimes served by unhappy means.

A Reply

"Sir: I am collecting poems relating to the late John Berryman for an anthology to be published next year, A Tumult For John Berryman."

Oh no, let's not be tumultuous;
try *serene*, try *gentle*
after all. Sane and boring maybe
at the end I hoped
he'd be—Old and hoary like some
ancient stoic laureate
who fakes senility in order
to survive—and manages,
and lasts it out.

At the funeral of tenderness
he thought he walked; let's
have a little then—
of tenderness, and
some respect. Because beyond the tumult
and the swagger—deep inside
that house that Henry built—there
sat down once, serene, a free
and gentle man.

John Matthias

A Delicate Question of Payment

J. R. Ackerley & John Maynard Keynes

The Listener,
Broadcasting House, W.1
27 May, 1936

DEAR KEYNES, I am trying to organise a series of articles for *The Listener*, for the summer months, under the title of "Art and the State." It will form a kind of inquiry into the condition of modern art at home and abroad in relationship to the social crisis. By art, perhaps I had better explain to start with, I mean painting, architecture, and such new forms of art as, for instance, the pageantry of ceremony and festivity. I am trying to get nationals from Italy, Germany and Russia to give an account of what art is doing under their various political régimes; what its object is under Fascism, Nazism and Communism, and what are its achievements—what, in short, is, or should be, in their view, the relationship between Art and the State. I think, and hope you will agree, that this is a fascinating subject.

After some investigations I have asked *Staatskommissar* Hans Hinkel, who has been newly

appointed by Goebbels to direct German cultural matters, to put the Nazi point of view (and I understand that he has consented to do so); and for the Fascist and Communist theories, I have written respectively to Ugo Ojetti and Victor Lazareff. Georges Duthuit will probably write for France; and Kenneth Clark has consented to sum up the whole series. What I want now, however, is somebody to write an introductory article, and I am wondering whether I could persuade you to do this? We feel that this article should, so to speak, be about the problems in connection with Art and the State as they would present themselves to the ordinary intelligent man's mind, and that it would be better, therefore, to get a layman like yourself, with an interest in the subject, to do this. I do hope you will feel inclined to accept this suggestion; and should be exceedingly grateful, also, for any advice you could give me.

Yours sincerely,

J. R. ACKERLEY

THE LATE J. R. ACKERLEY, who died in 1967, had a very restricted literary output, but each of his books—*Hindoo Holiday*, *My Dog Tulip* (parts of which were first published in *ENCOUNTER*), *We Think the World of You*, *My Father and Myself*—has established itself as a minor classic, and it is for these books that he will be chiefly remembered. But to his friends he was no less memorable as a person, who united strength with sweetness of character in an almost unique degree, than as a writer; and all the more so because there was always a slight air of mystery about him, which after his death *My Father and Myself* (1968) did something to explain.

We shall learn a great deal more about him from this comprehensive collection of his letters¹, to which "A Delicate Question of Payment" forms an appendix, to be published early next year by Duckworth. Ackerley was an indefatigable letter-writer; and devoted as much care to the composition of his letters as to that of his books, because he was infinitely

scrupulous in everything he did. His correspondence, however, falls very sharply into two parts, as indeed in many ways his life did. The first is composed of letters to a small group of close and intimate friends, including in particular E. M. Forster and William Plomer, who formed a kind of secret society which not many people were privileged to penetrate; and these form a valuable contribution to the literary history of our time. The second consists of letters he wrote to contributors as Literary Editor of "The Listener". It was a position he occupied for twenty-five years, and frequently found tedious, stultifying and unrewarding, but nevertheless discharged with a devotion to duty which made the literary and artistic pages of *The Listener* flourish as they never have before or since. These letters reveal some of his most attractive characteristics; his courtesy, his taste, his sensitiveness to whatever was genuinely new and original, but also a certain bulldog persistence in getting what he wanted.

His correspondence with Keynes is in this respect typical. Keynes was a formidable opponent in argument, but nevertheless, one feels that in this case it was Ackerley who had his own way.

G.R.

¹ *The Letters of J. R. Ackerley*. Edited by NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE. Duckworth, £10.

46 Gordon Square, Bloomsbury
27 May, 1936

MY DEAR ACKERLEY, I always regret it afterwards when I get lured into taking on another job. However, the article you suggest does interest me, and I am not disinclined to try my hand at it.

May I assume that you do not mean to exclude opera, ballet and drama?

The failure of the nineteenth century democracies to maintain the grandeur and dignity of the State is, in my judgment, one at least of the seeds of their decay; and what I should offer would be a development of that theme. Is that the sort of thing you have in mind?

Yours sincerely,

J. M. KEYNES

12 June, 36

DEAR KEYNES, I am returning now to the subject of "Art and the State" which, after receiving your exceedingly welcome and gratifying consent to open the series with an introduction, I put aside to await replies to my invitations abroad. These are now coming in.

Goebbels' new Director of Culture, *Staatskommissar* Hans Hinkel, is furnishing me with an explanation of the art principles of German National Socialism which, with its pictorial illustrations, is I gather, to receive the authorisation of the leading personality in German Art matters himself; L. Cherniavsky, Acting President of the U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations, has actually written to say he has the matter in hand, and Georges Duthuit has promised to turn France inside out.

Only Italy so far refuses to answer my letters of entreaty; but if [Gino] Severini, my present candidate, refuses I believe that I can always fall back on F. T. Marinetti, unless the political

situation is still too strained for even an art article to pass from Italy to us. I have asked all these people to tell me what in theory and practice the relationship is, under their particular régimes, between Art and the State: what its objects are, how it works, and what are the fruits of that relationship.

I have defined art as painting, sculpture and architecture, with any new forms such as pageantry; but I am quite ready to include opera, ballet, drama and even the films too, if you think that they, besides yourself in your introduction, should treat of them. My only reason for not including them was that I was afraid of overloading comparatively short *mss*. But I agree perfectly that you should not exclude them in your introductory article, and, no doubt, you will be mentioning, too, the commercial art of the poster, etc. This side of it naturally interests Sir Stephen Tallents, and I thought it might interest you to see his pamphlet on the subject [*The Art of the Poster* (1936)], which I enclose.

The point of view from which you wish to discuss the whole subject in your introduction to it is a very interesting one, I think, and I look forward with much eagerness to reading it. I am hoping to start the series off in the issue of July 29th, and since we like to have scripts in our hands a fortnight in advance, that takes us back to July 15th; but if it would be possible for you to send me in your article even a week earlier than that—by July 8th—it would be convenient, as I am anxious to assemble the whole series as soon as I can, so that they can all be forwarded to Kenneth Clark for his summing-up. Another point is—will you be illustrating your article? My Editor



J. R. ACKERLEY

always likes illustrations whenever possible, so if this is practicable and agreeable to you will you let me know what you would like, and I would set about procuring them.

Finally, we have not yet discussed a fee for your article. Would ten guineas be a satisfactory one?

Yours sincerely,

J. R. ACKERLEY

June 14th, 1936

DEAR ACKERLEY,
I will let you have the article in good time. Would you tell me the approximate number of words required? As regards illustrations, I am not very good at finding them, but possibly your pictorial department could supply some when they see the article. Will the question of illustration affect the number of words you will want?

The question of fee raises rather a delicate question and also a matter of principle. My practice has been to make a distinction between papers which are not run for profit, where I accept whatever I am offered down to nothing, and papers which are run for profit. In the case of the latter, my practice for many years past has been to vary the rate, according to circumstances from a minimum of 6d a word up to 1/- a word, and occasionally higher. As it happens, by the same post that I am writing this I am refusing a request to write a series of articles for £100 a week which does work out at 8d a word, and I have little doubt that, if I were to bargain, I could obtain a higher figure.

Now, I imagine that *The Listener* is run for

profit. If not, it would make a great difference. Assuming it is run for profit, I think your rate should approach my normal minimum figure, that is to say, it should approximate to 6d a word, though I should raise no objection if you were to round the resulting figure off a bit in your own favour.

Yours sincerely,

J. M. KEYNES

June 16, 36

DEAR KEYNES,
Thank you so much for your letter. I perfectly understand your principle and practice in the matter of fees, but the position with regard to *The Listener* is that, contrary to your impression, it is not a profit-making journal. In January, 1929, when it first appeared, the B.B.C. entered into a contract with the Publishers' Committee respecting the publishing and press interests of the whole country—the principal item of the contract being that *The Listener* was never to make a profit, and that if at any time its revenue exceeded its expenditure, it was to carry less advertisements, etc. You will see, therefore, that *The Listener* does not

contribute to the Corporation's revenue from publications, and is not to be numbered among profit-making journals. In the light of this, therefore, will you consider it possible to accept a lower fee for the article than the one mentioned in your letter?

The number of words required for this article should not exceed 2000 which is assuming that we should be able to give it about 3 inset illustrations.



JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES

If it were not to be illustrated, the article could, of course, be a little longer.

Yours sincerely,

J. R. ACKERLEY

June 18th, 1936

MY DEAR ACKERLEY, I am greatly interested in what you tell me in your

letter of June 16th. But the peculiar result is that I shall apparently benefit no-one whomsoever by accepting less than my usual fee. I shall not benefit *The Listener* or the B.B.C. or the public, but merely defeat some would-be advertiser of his desire to advertise. I am afraid this can hardly be considered on all fours with assisting a publication which has no great financial resources. I am

Keynes on Art & the State

THE ANCIENT WORLD knew that the public needed circuses as well as bread. And, policy apart, its rulers for their own glory and satisfaction expended an important proportion of the national wealth on ceremony, works of art and magnificent buildings. These policies, habits and traditions were not confined to the Greek and Roman world. They began as early as man working with his bare hands has left records behind him, and they continued in changing forms and with various purposes, from Stonehenge to Salisbury Cathedral, down at least to the age of Sir Christopher Wren, Louis XIV and Peter the Great. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the rich nobility continued in a private, self-regarding and attenuated manner what had been the office of the monarch and the State, with the Church somewhat in eclipse. But there commenced in the eighteenth century and reached a climax in the nineteenth a new view of the functions of the State and of Society, which still governs us today.

This view was the utilitarian and economic—one might almost say financial—ideal, as the sole, respectable purpose of the community as a whole; the most dreadful heresy, perhaps, which has ever gained the ear of a civilised people. Bread and nothing but bread, and not even bread, and bread accumulating at compound interest until it has turned into a stone. Poets and artists have lifted occasional weak voices against the heresy. I fancy that the Prince Consort was the last protester to be found in high places. But the Treasury view has prevailed. Not only in practice. The theory is equally powerful. We have persuaded ourselves that it is positively wicked for the State to spend a halfpenny on non-economic purposes. Even education and public health only creep in under an economic alias on the ground that they "pay". We still apply some frantic perversion of business arithmetic in order to settle the problem whether it pays better to pour milk down the drains or to feed it to school children. One form alone of uncalculated expenditure survives from the heroic age—War. And even that must sometimes pretend to be economic. If there arises some occasion of non-economic expenditure which it would be a manifest public scandal to forgo, it is thought suitable to hand round the hat to solicit the charity of private persons.

This expedient is sometimes applied in cases which would be incredible if we were not so well accustomed to them. An outstanding example is to be

found where the preservation of the countryside from exploitation is required for reasons of health, recreation, amenity or natural beauty. This is a particularly good example of the way in which we are hag-ridden by a perverted theory of the State, not only because no expenditure of the national resources is involved but, at the most, only a transfer from one pocket into another, but because there is perhaps no current matter about the importance and urgency of which there is such national unanimity in every quarter. When a stretch of cliff, a reach of the Thames, a slope of down is scheduled for destruction, it does not occur to the Prime Minister that the obvious remedy is for the State to prohibit the outrage and pay just compensation, if any; that would be uneconomic. There is probably no man who minds the outrage more than he. But he is the thrall of the sub-human denizens of the Treasury. There is nothing for it but a letter to *The Times* and to hand round the hat. He even helps to administer a private charity fund, nobly provided by a foreigner, to make such donations as may be required from time to time to prevent such things as Shakespeare's cliff from being converted into cement. So low have we fallen today in our conception of the duty and purpose, the honour and glory of the State. . . .

THE POSITION TODAY of artists of all sorts is disastrous. The attitude of an artist to his work renders him exceptionally unsuited for financial contacts. His state of mind is just the opposite of that of a man the main purpose of whose work is his livelihood. The artist alternates between economic imprudence, when any association between his work and money is repugnant, and an excessive greediness, when no reward seems adequate to what is without price. He needs economic security and enough income, and then to be left to himself, at the same time the servant of the public and his own master. He is not easy to help. For he needs a responsive spirit of the age, which we cannot deliberately invoke. We can help him best, perhaps, by promoting an atmosphere of open-handedness, of liberality, of candour, of toleration, of experiment, of optimism, which expects to find some things good. It is our sitting tight-buttoned in the present, with no hope or belief in the future, which weighs him down.

John Maynard Keynes (1936)

extremely amused that this should be the result of a contract with the Publishers' Committee. For, obviously, it enormously increases your power to compete, since you are free to devote to the improvement and attractiveness of the paper sums which would almost certainly be diverted into the coffers of the B.B.C., if the contract had not been made. What the Publishers' Committee ought to have stipulated for, if they wished to avoid competition, is that *The Listener* should never make a profit of less than x per cent of its published price!

Having said the above, and having pointed out that a lower fee will benefit neither you, nor me, nor Sir John, nor the listener-in, nor the taxpayer, nor anyone else, I will leave myself in your hands with the suggestion that a fee of 25 guineas might be a proper compromise. I can honestly say that I am not in the least concerned from the financial point of view, and have given up writing as a means of income. But as a member, so to speak, of the Trade Union of writers, and by general habit of mind, I cannot bring myself altogether to neglect the point of principle.

Yours sincerely,

J. M. KEYNES

Ackerley wrote in the margin: "Editor—We shall have to accept this." But on second thoughts he decided not to be so easily "out-argued" and wrote the following letter.

19 June, 36
DEAR KEYNES, I am so highly diverted by your letter and this correspondence that I cannot forgo the pleasure of continuing it to enquire whether I am to understand that because the B.B.C. is under an obligation not to make a profit out of *The Listener* it ought therefore to be content to make a loss? The object of the B.B.C. in conducting *The Listener* is to run it as a non-profit-making service, neither involving a financial liability in the shape of a loss, which presumably must come out of the licence-holder's pocket, nor a profit. This being so, it follows that by accepting less than your usual fee you would, in fact, be benefitting the listening public, because you would bring the accounts of *The Listener* nearer

to that state of exact balance between profit and loss which will free *The Listener* from dependence upon the licence-holder. On the other hand, if your argument were sound that you would apparently benefit no-one whomsoever by accepting less than your usual fee, this principle would be satisfactory if applied generally to all non-profit-making undertakings. It would then follow that if you were writing for a charity or a public service of any kind, there would be no point in charging less than the standard fee. In fact, however, doctors and other professional people do make a considerable difference between the fees which they charge when they are working for a non-profit-making concern and those which they charge when they are working for an ordinary profit-making commercial undertaking. Nor would your action defeat some would-be advertiser of his desire to advertise, since it is reasonable to suppose that he would spend the same money in advertising in some other organ, which would actually be a benefit to our competitors. So may I reduce your suggestion to 20 guineas?

Yours sincerely,

J. R. ACKERLEY

June 23rd 1936

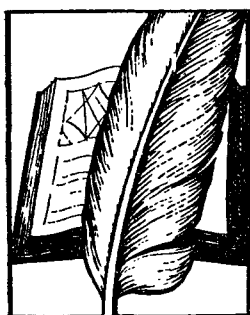
MY DEAR ACKERLEY, My letter was based on the assumption that you are already restricting your advertising revenue below its maximum. I was also assuming that the amount spent by advertisers on weekly papers is not a fixed amount, but depends on their view as to the value they are getting.

My argument only applies, of course, to a non-profit-making undertaking which is deliberately raking in smaller receipts than it could get. I know no other example of such a state of affairs except your peculiar organ.

Yours sincerely,

J. M. KEYNES

Keynes sent his article in in good time—and it appeared on 26 August 1936 [see excerpts on previous page]. Unfortunately the BBC records, which would have shown the fee that he was paid, were destroyed during an air raid on London early in the War.



Column

UNIVERSITIES, in public reputation at least, have recently fallen upon evil days. Gone is the time when almost unlimited hopes were placed in their indefinite expansion, and when it was felt that university education

was for all, or nearly all, except the obviously illiterate and innumerate. Indeed, from what other source could the state and industry derive the endless stream of qualified recruits which a modern economy requires for its progress and prosperity? Nor were such hopes inspired by merely utilitarian considerations. The products of the universities, swelling in numbers every year, would not only be equipped for the technical and administrative tasks the future would demand of them; they would also have acquired, almost unconsciously, some of the other benefits of a university education. They would be tolerant and humane; they would love truth for its own sake; they would introduce into the barbarism of industrial and post-industrial society something of the sweetness and light which Matthew Arnold regarded as the distinctive mark of culture as opposed to anarchy.

Alas! how short a time it has taken for that vision to fade. The public image of the contemporary student is that of a hirsute, mannerless lout, a parasite upon the taxpayer, who devotes the time and energy intended for the pursuit of learning to reproducing in the heart of the university the violent and destructive conflicts which rage outside its walls. In the United States the students rose in protest against the evils of the war in Viet Nam and in Paris against the evils of capitalism; they did so by methods which reduced their own universities to a battlefield. Academe is no longer a *hortus inclusus* in which, for a short time, young men and women enjoy the inestimable privilege of cultivating their own talents, before using them for the benefit of others; it is merely a microcosm of the outer world, only more so.

THIS HORRID REPUTATION, assiduously promoted by the media, no doubt does an immense injustice to the great majority of students, and exaggerates the part played in university life by a barbarous and bellicose minority. On this, I think, any one with any direct experience of university life would agree. Yet recently there have been signs that it has a basis of fact which should not be ignored. There have been scenes

at several British universities, which suggest that some at least of them are failing to fulfil their function. Businessmen complain that they can no longer look to the universities for recruits with the qualifications and abilities which they require. Some universities report difficulties in finding candidates for admission of a sufficiently high standard. At the same time, as if by a healthy revulsion against the conditions which obtain at some universities, many of the young are turning their faces against them, and try to find other means of equipping themselves for the serious business of life.

A slightly ambivalent comment on this state of affairs is to be found in a recent recruiting advertisement for the Army, in which a number of prominent businessmen proclaim their belief that three years in the Army are equivalent to a university degree. It would be hard to say whether such a view reflects the great efforts made by the Army to improve its own standards of education and training or the loss of prestige and status suffered by the universities. There was a time when it would have seemed absurd.

A VIVID PICTURE of university life today, a sort of contemporary Verdant Green, is to be found in Lord Annan's fascinating, if depressing, report on the outbreaks of student violence which have recently taken place at the University of Essex. There militant students picketed lecture rooms and forcibly prevented staff and students from entering. Lectures and classes were disrupted. The Vice-Chancellor's office and the administration block were occupied, and files were removed and destroyed. In addition to other forms of persecution and abuse, the Vice-Chancellor was locked in his office and "interrogated against his will." (How did they manage this? did they torture him?) Damage was caused amounting to £40,000, with a further £6,000 for replacing locks, as the master keys of the university had been stolen.

Noel Annan rightly endorses the action of Vice-Chancellor Sloman in enlisting the aid of the law and the police to control the disorder. What is surprising is that there should have been members of the staff who regarded this as an unwarrantable intrusion on the rights of the students. He complains, however, that the punishments which were finally imposed, after long delay, on those students who could be identified as responsible, were so trivial as to bring academic discipline, and the authority of the university, into contempt.

What impresses one most about the report is that it is the description of an institution in which there was no common authority which each of its constituent elements respected and

recognised, and, because of this, was sufficiently strong to maintain order, not by force, but by consent. This is in fact a description of anarchy. Lord Annan's report, though outspoken, is a masterpiece of tact and diplomacy; but for all that it cannot avoid giving the impression that for a time it was indeed anarchy that ruled at Essex.

PERHAPS THIS WOULD NOT MATTER so much if this was a condition which only applied, and for a short time, at Essex. Just as one can say that the militant student is the exception and not the rule, so one might say that conditions at Essex were abnormal, as compared with those at other universities. But this is to comfort oneself rather too easily.

If one reads Lord Annan's analysis of the underlying causes of the disorders, one becomes uncomfortably aware that they were conditions which are unfortunately prevalent elsewhere. Administration was in the hands of committees whose methods were bureaucratic and impersonal. Concentration on research involved the neglect of teaching, so that, ironically, the university's admirable achievements in the field of research helped to contribute to its own disorder. Professors tended to neglect their administrative and disciplinary duties. A fashionable concern with "inter-disciplinary studies" (which often means studies that involve the command of no discipline at all) eroded the boundaries of departments, so that they provided no firm base for the academic activities of the staff. As for the students, they (or the militant section of them) claimed the status of a trade union, with the same rights to strike, to picket, and to "negotiate" on behalf of their members, though their idea of negotiating was to present "unnegotiable" demands. In any case, their manners would have shamed any trade union; but in this respect the staff do not seem to have set a good example. Lord Annan finds it necessary to recommend that classes or lectures should not be cancelled without prior notice. What kind of university can it be in which such common courtesies are neglected?

When we study this unattractive picture, what strikes us is that the pattern it describes is, far from being particular to Essex, to a larger or lesser degree common to most of our universities today. No doubt there were particular features at Essex, such as the lack of a Students' Union, which helped to exacerbate feelings and contributed to the outbreak of disorder. But what is more important is the general pattern, which makes it possible that at any university similar outbreaks may occur at any time.

AT ESSEX, THEN, conditions which are general to many universities combined with local and particular ones, forming an explosive compound which finally blew up. Lord Annan is rightly wary of offering a prescription for preventing a repetition of such a situation, for his own analysis shows that this would require reform, not merely of conditions at Essex, but at many other, perhaps, most universities. In his recommendations he gives first priority to the provision of a Students' Union, though this implicitly justifies one of the students' main demands and suggests that the particular ideal of an "academic community" which Dr Sloman has striven to realise at Essex has proved impractical. He also recommends that the university authorities, including Dr Sloman, should adopt a different "style" of administration: less bureaucratic, less rigid, less inflexible, than the existing one. But I fear that in this he is, for once, being slightly evasive. For what is a "style" in administration, but a reflection of the way in which things actually work in an institution, and of the nature of the institution itself and of the men who operate it? In asking the authorities at Essex to change their style, he is really asking them to change the university and themselves.

Yet perhaps he is right to do so; only this would imply, from the nature of Lord Annan's analysis, that many other universities should change their "style" also. There is a danger that in concentrating on particular outbreaks of student militancy and on attempting to remove their local and particular causes, one may overlook the more fundamental reasons for dissatisfaction with the condition of the universities at the present time.

PERHAPS WE OUGHT TO REGARD, and accept, such excesses as inevitable, if unfortunate, features of contemporary university life, like the periodical outbreaks of violence, murder, arson and civil disorder in the great universities of the Middle Ages. Though they regularly required the intervention of the civil authority, the punishment of students (and, sometimes, of their masters), they did not prevent the medieval universities from being the greatest intellectual influence of their time. Such outbreaks would be tolerable if in fact one were satisfied that the universities of today were, like their medieval counterparts, carrying out those cultural tasks which are implicit in the very idea of a university. They become intolerable if they are seen as the direct consequence of the form which university education has assumed today and the institutions in which it is embodied.

The activities of what Lord Annan calls the "wreckers" among the student population would

be of small importance if one felt that the universities were sure of what their purpose should be and of the means by which it should be carried out. Lord Annan's report should be read by everyone who is concerned with university education, both young and old; only we should realise that it says rather more than perhaps he would care to admit to.

★

THE SAD STORY of Essex is perhaps in itself sufficient to explain why some people should look round for other means of providing a university education than can be found through our existing system, in which higher education is effectively the monopoly of the State. There are indeed some who, like Professor Mishan, would claim that this is the overriding factor which is at the root of the present troubles in the universities, the bizarre effect of monopoly having been to create a situation in which the investor (taxpayer) has no control of his capital, management (university administration) is responsible to nobody, and the consumer (student) has no effective freedom of choice. In any other field such a situation would rightly be regarded as intolerable. Why should it be any more acceptable in the field of higher education?

One may doubt the propriety of subjecting universities to a purely economic analysis; they are not, after all, commercial enterprises. But they have an economic aspect. They are the means by which we invest increasingly scarce intellectual and material sources in higher education. The question inevitably arises whether, as they stand, they are the best, or the only way, of doing so. After all, it is only comparatively recently that the State has become the sole purveyor of university education; and it has assumed this position without any of the debate and discussion which would be provoked if the State were to nationalise any other field of activity of equal importance to the ordinary citizen. The proposal to nationalise North Sea oil, for instance, is subjected to the most severe scrutiny and examination and inspires violent controversy. The Labour government has met with strong, and on the whole effective, opposition to its attempts to secure exclusive control of secondary education. But very few people question the right of the state to acquire a monopoly in the universities.

Nevertheless, some do, and are prepared to back their doubts by practical action. Among them are those university teachers and industrialists who in recent years have devoted much energy, thought, and considerable resources to the attempt to found at Buckingham a new university financed entirely by fees and private endowments. Their efforts have achieved considerable success;

and one could say that the university, or rather, the University College as it is now to be called, already exists in embryo. A Principal was appointed, in the person of Max Beloff, at that time Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Institutions at Oxford, and a distinguished champion of liberal ideas. The nucleus of an academic staff has also been appointed; a site and appropriate buildings have been acquired at Buckingham; and the college has been assured of powerful support both from industry and from within the universities. Many ancient colleges, venerable with age and with great achievements to their credit, have been built on shakier foundations. Matters have indeed progressed so far that in February 1976 the college proposes to open its doors to students in three courses; in Law; in Economics; and in Law, Economics and Government.

AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, the infant university has met with an unexpected obstacle. It has, for a considerable time, been in negotiation with CNAAB, the Council for National Academic Awards, which is the body responsible for conferring degree status on courses of study outside the established universities, which derive their right to confer degrees from Royal Charter. The college had every reason to believe that its application would be successful. Recognition, however, has been abruptly refused by the CNAAB; and it appears that the college will now have to open its doors without any official approval of its syllabus. This is a heavy blow to the hopes entertained by its sponsors and its staff, and a very severe obstacle to the college's future development.

There are of course some serious doubts about the prospects of the college at Buckingham. One is whether industry, on which the college will largely depend for its finance, is likely to prove a better, or as good a taskmaster as the State. It is as true in higher education as in other fields that he who pays the piper calls the tune, and one might legitimately question whether the college's industrial benefactors will call for better tunes than, for instance, the University Grants Committee. One might also reasonably doubt whether the college will ever command sufficient resources to grow to a sufficient size to support the manifold variety of academic activities, especially in the field of science, which would ever justify it in claiming to be a university in the true sense of the word.

These, however, are not the objections put forward by the CNAAB. The first of these is that the college proposes to offer two-year courses of study, as opposed to the three-year courses which

are normal at British universities and are themselves open to criticism as being too short. The college course, however, would require an 80-week programme of study, as compared with the slightly shorter period of formal instruction provided for in the normal British university degree course. It is quite impossible to take the CNAAs objection seriously when one discovers that, for instance, the degree course at three different colleges of education, approved by the CNAAs, consists of "three years of study, requiring attendance on Monday afternoons (with half-day releases) and on Monday and Wednesday evenings...." The degree with honours may be taken over three or four years.

A second objection raised, somewhat belatedly, by the CNAAs is that, initially, only a small part of the academic staff of the college will be full time, though supplemented by a long and distinguished list of part-time teachers. This again conjures up a picture of one of those abandoned and deserted campuses with which Essex has made us familiar; but one doubts whether, in this respect, the college could be in worse case than many universities, and certainly not worse than many of the educational institutions to which the CNAAs extend its recognition and approval.

In raising these objections, the CNAAs, however, takes no account of the very real advantages which the college at Buckingham believes it has to offer. One is the very distinguished list of teachers on which it can rely for support and which is an assurance that its standards will not fall below those observed in other institutions

of recognised academic standing; indeed, given the extent of the academic goodwill on which it can draw, they have a very good chance of being higher. Another is that its students, paying for their own fees and subsistence, are more likely to be genuinely interested in learning, more "motivated" as the current jargon goes, than many of their counterparts at existing universities; quite simply, they will be more anxious not to waste their, or their parents' money.

MOST OF ALL, ONE FEELS, the college at Buckingham has the great advantage of introducing a new and different strand into the existing pattern of university education in this country, and any institution which does so, while aiming at academic excellence, as the college does, is to be welcomed, because the existing pattern is not a very attractive one. No one can doubt the energy and enthusiasm, or the intellectual distinction, of those associated with the project or their determination to make a success of it; and it is to the general advantage that they should do so, and should be helped to do so.

One hopes very much, therefore, either that the CNAAs will reconsider its objections or that the college may find other means of securing the academic recognition which it seeks. In the end, of course, unless it is nipped untimely in the bud, it will be by its fruits that it will be judged. There is good reason to believe that they may be rather more palatable than some of those which the universities have recently been able to offer us.

R

Cairn

Stairs leading nowhere, roof
To no accommodation, monument
To itself, half-scattered.

An old badge of belonging
To the available heights,
A shrug and a smile, as though

Having climbed two thousand feet
You could climb a few feet more
And the view might be different.

John Fuller

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Morality & Law

By Shirley Robin Letwin

TO DEBATE the relation between Law and Morality has recently become a fashionable preoccupation. What is supposed to be at issue is a conflict between liberty and legal restrictions on private conduct in order to protect "morality." But however the so-called conflict is formulated, it reflects a confusion about the character of law. The confusion rests on a failure to distinguish between two kinds of considerations that are intrinsic to law, both of which are "moral."

The bandying about of words such as "individualism" and "liberty" has served mainly to add acerbity to the confusion. Nevertheless the confusion is connected with the defence of what is commonly described as individualism. Though it is supposed to be a modern idea, the arguments in defence of individualism draw heavily on ancient sources. But the defenders of modern individualism have failed to see where it differs from its ancient models, and thus mistake its character and the questions that they are obliged to answer. As a result they have conjured up a conflict between individualism and communal morality which inspires the current debate on law and morality. To dispel the confusion, it is essential to consider first the character of ancient individualism.

THE CLASSIC STATEMENT of ancient individualism is to be found in Aristotle. He understood a *polis* to consist of rational beings whose association enlarged, rather than hindered, their freedom to choose for themselves how they shall live. He rejected Plato's view that the members of a well-ordered community should be understood as functional parts of a whole with ends distinct

from, and superior to, the avowed purposes of individual human beings. Nevertheless, Aristotle could say at the end of the *Ethics*, without feeling obliged to explain, both that laws should be designed to produce good men and that the laws should not tell anyone how to live.

Ascribing these two different characters to law did not pose any problems for Aristotle partly because he took for granted a belief in a rational cosmos that had an order comprehensible to rational creatures. As men could take their bearings by Nature, what constituted a good man was a truth accessible to all human beings who had learned to exercise their rational faculty. More than that, Aristotle was reflecting on a small homogeneous community which, despite his concern with distinguishing the *polis* from the tribe, retained some of the same features. In the circumstances familiar to Aristotle, it was plausible to expect the members of a political association, such as the *polis*, to be directly acquainted with many if not all aspects of their communal life. Even though nothing like the current chimera of "participatory democracy" was ever possible or contemplated, there could exist the sort of regular, intimate social intercourse that easily gives rise to and supports a consensus about what sort of characters, attitudes, activities are most worthy of esteem, what constitutes civilisation, or (in the words of Aristotle) what makes for a good human life.

A man who pursued the good life might be expected to recognise the superiority of learning over gambling and to order his life in such a fashion as not to interfere with the fulfilment of his intellectual capacities. He would prefer to live in a *politeia* where he would rule, and be ruled in turn, rather than to withdraw wholly from political life to live as a hermit, doing nothing but painting or praying. But just how he proposed to exercise his intellectual faculties, or in precisely what manner he chose to take political responsibility remained for him to decide. In short, the consensus of a *polis* does not impose the uniformity of a theocracy. It does not

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tell its members what to do at any given time. It implies nothing like Sabbatarian regulations requiring everyone to attend church or to refrain from dancing on Sundays. Nevertheless it does imply that the communal life takes a certain shape.

THE CHARACTER OF SUCH A CONSENSUS has been impressively described by Thucydides in Pericles' Funeral Oration. Athens is distinguished, Pericles said, not only by a certain form of government—by the rule of law—but also by a certain spirit governing the daily relations of its citizens: "We have no black looks or angry words for our neighbour if he enjoys himself in his own way, and we abstain from the little acts of churlishness which, though they leave no mark, yet cause annoyance to whoever notes them. . . ." Foreign visitors are welcomed and no one is thrown out. Yet Athenians also "acknowledge the restraint of reverence" and respect authority. And they want Athens to be not "a workaday city only. No other city provides so many recreations for the spirit—contests and sacrifices all the year round, and beauty in our public buildings to cheer the heart and delight the eye day by day. But there is no extravagance in the Athenian love of beauty, nor unmanliness in their love of wisdom." Wealth is "not mere material for vain-glory but an opportunity for achievement. . . ." On the other hand, Athenian military training is conducted in a different spirit from that of Sparta. However, the man "who holds aloof from public life, is regarded not as 'quiet' but as useless. . . ."

Whether or not Athenians really regarded themselves in this fashion need not concern us. What matters is that both Thucydides and Aristotle have given us a conception of a community in which every member, while pursuing his own purposes, recognises that his association with other equally independent individuals has a distinctive character understood precisely enough to allow agreement on what sorts of conduct are compatible with it. This means that when the members of such an association have to choose between alternatives, whatever else they may disagree about, they need not spell out their basic beliefs in the course of deliberation. They can consider whether either, or both, of the alternatives is compatible with the character of their civilisation without having to consider that character. They will generally not have to explain to one another whether it is worthwhile to distinguish a work of art from a sexual experience, whether children are to be encouraged to become as uninhibited or as civilised as possible. They probably will not have to ask whether abortion or divorce is acceptable; or if they do

differ on such questions, their discussion will be clearly shaped by agreement on some basic considerations. In such circumstances, the decision of a legislative assembly is an unselfconscious exercise of authority in accordance with generally accepted moral standards. Any of these standards may change. Any agreement may dissolve. But so long as some significant consensus remains, there will be a common moral context for deliberation. The individualism described by Aristotle and Thucydides presupposed such a context without elaborating on how it qualified either the individuality or the association of the members of the *polis*.

MODERN INDIVIDUALISM does not explicitly include any such context of moral consensus among its premises. It is replete with talk of rights and liberties, but what these great boons have to do with morality is taken for granted rather than understood. The result is much baleful verbiage about the law.

What dogs modern individualism is a fear of authority. It rests on a misunderstanding usually associated with Hobbes. He argued that as there is no way in which autonomous rational beings can discover rules that are indisputably desirable, civil peace can be preserved only by submitting to an authorised ruler. He thus isolated from the complex ancient notion of a *polis* the element of authority, and he sharply distinguished between the authority and desirability of any law. In making this distinction he made it obvious that government has an ineradicable element of arbitrariness. For men had to accept an authorised law even when they did not approve of it. And this arbitrariness is, according to Hobbes, an inescapable consequence of recognising the individuality of human beings.

As Hobbes did not consider alternative manners of constituting authority or (except incidentally) discuss criteria for judging the desirability of law, he encouraged the belief that submission to authority is identical with accepting absolutist government. His successors, who accepted his picture of human individuality, were preoccupied with destroying the gap between the authority and the desirability of a law. To accept this gap, they supposed (wrongly) meant accepting absolutism. Modern political thought has therefore concentrated on discovering some way of securing perfect consensus on the desirability of a law. Two patterns for achieving this miracle have dominated modern discussions, and they were suggested by Rousseau and Bentham.

ROUSSEAU SUGGESTED, at least to some of his readers, that the problem raised by Hobbes

could be eliminated by denying the individuality of the subjects. If each individual divested himself of his particularising will and repudiated what made him unique and inspired him to pursue projects at variance with the wants of others, there could be perfect agreement on what laws were desirable. Then political cohesion could be understood as an association "in which each while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone and remain as free as before." The sovereign becomes identical with all the individual members of the community, and there is no disparity possible between the authority and the desirability of the law. Whether or not they find it in Rousseau, this is the dream that inspires the contemporary advocates of "participatory democracy" and the inmates of "communes."

The solution proposed by Bentham respects the separateness of individuals but at the cost of reducing right to might. Although Bentham emphasised the disagreeable connection between coercion and government, he supposed that he had discovered a formula for making certain that this coercion was exercised justly. The search for a formula of this kind still inspires many of the practitioners of political science and economics. His "calculus of pleasures" could, Bentham supposed, make it certain that every exercise of authority should receive the consent—to its desirability as well as to its validity—of every rational man. But Bentham's formula ignored the problem (that Hobbes recognised so plainly) of judging the value of what autonomous beings choose to want, of deciding which man's desires, or indeed which of any man's desires, should take pre-eminence. As a result, instead of maximising consent, as he supposed he had done, Bentham's formula awards the power to decide to those who can best claim attention to their demands. Bentham's proposal for a moral consensus purged of moral judgments produces what is euphemistically described today as "government by pressure groups," which is really no government at all, but the rule of might disguised by sophistry.

JOHN STUART MILL'S EFFORTS to improve on Bentham's formula by suggesting that "harm to others" might be the criterion for interfering with individual pursuits dodged the problem in another fashion. For what is regarded as harmful is no more self-evident than what constitutes a valid want. It depends on shared beliefs, full of intricate qualifications and connections, about what constitutes decent conduct. To ride horses across a neighbour's field in pursuit of a fox was not considered harmful in Victorian England, not even by non-hunting farmers, but visiting Americans saw in such privileges nothing but an

outrageous act of trespass. To insist that the law should punish offenders only according to the harm they do is either to advocate measures that would be regarded as preposterous or to deceive oneself about the meaning of "harm." For example, we are not likely to think it reasonable to fine a man who murdered a very objectionable, aged, and ailing mother-in-law—and to impose a prison sentence of five years on someone who happened to park his car in the middle of the road at the centre of town a week before Christmas. Obviously offences are not graded simply by the harm that is done, if harm is equated with any simple-minded notion of damage or inconvenience. Once the idea of harm is acknowledged to include more, then it must be admitted that the judgment about whether conduct is "harmful" is a moral judgment, and no easier or more automatic than any other moral judgment.

ALL THESE ATTEMPTS to discover ways of achieving a moral consensus are designed to fill a deficiency in Hobbes's account of authority. But the effort to speak of a moral consensus without acknowledging its moral character is made because Hobbes's view of human beings as ultimately unique and private is accepted, while any attempt to base a moral consensus on Nature or knowledge of God is rejected. This is what sharply distinguishes modern from traditional individualists. Because a moral consensus was traditionally associated with a belief in Nature or God, and because repudiation of this belief was connected with affirming the individuality of men, modern individualists have been disposed to regard any consideration of a moral consensus as an attempt to deny or stifle human individuality. The recent efforts to inoculate the law more perfectly against having to deal with questions of morality are another variation in this modern individualist tradition. By removing "moral" questions from the aegis of the law, it is argued, the law will not conflict with any pattern of life. It will then be easier to conduct discussions about the law in a "tolerant" fashion, without any danger of imposing any one view of how to live on all, indeed without having to consider any questions about "communal morality."

What has not been recognised by modern individualists is how much in the way of moral assumptions they have unselfconsciously taken for granted. The leading prophets of individualism have retained most of the moral convictions whose metaphysical foundations they have repudiated. It is true that Hume had sharp words for "monkish" virtues, and Bentham declared that push-pin was as good as poetry. But nevertheless both accepted, and indeed never

for a moment doubted, the moral practice associated with the rejected moral philosophy. Their allegiance to certain established notions of civilised life and behaviour was so much a part of them that they did not conceive of the possibility of questioning them. Thus, for all of Bentham's jokes at the expense of the natural law, he kept and strenuously advocated notions of justice which were not notably different from those of traditional natural law. Burke was more aware of the moral standards implicit in the freedom he wished to preserve; but, for all that he said about how these standards were threatened by zealous revolutionaries, he did not dream of their needing justification among ordinary men, for even villains and criminals acknowledged the standards they chose to violate.

The most striking example of suppressed moral assumptions in individualism can be found in the attitude of Mill towards certain legislation in areas other than those where he was an outright advocate of paternalism. Despite his strictures against interfering with individual liberty through censorship, he makes some odd exceptions. A day of rest, he tells us, should be enforced by law, not of course for religious reasons, since religious grounds constitute "a motive of legislation which never can be too earnestly protested against." But a day of rest from usual daily occupations is, Mill says, as if it were an indisputable fact, a "beneficial custom", and as this cannot be observed without general consent because if some people work, others must too, "it may be allowable and right that the law should guarantee to each the observance by others of the custom, by suspending the greater operations of industry on a particular day." That is not all. Violations of good manners may also be punished: "There are many acts which, being directly injurious only to the agents themselves, ought not to be legally interdicted, but which, if done publicly, are a violation of good manners, and coming thus within the category of offences against others, may rightfully be prohibited. Of this kind are offences against decency. . . ." Mill slips this censorship on moral behaviour into the category of offences against others. But the offence, as he describes it, consists merely in the fact that others find such behaviour unpleasant to contemplate. And he advocates such legislation in spite of having said just a few pages earlier that nothing was more reprehensible than the doctrine that gives "mankind a vested interest in each other's moral, intellectual, and even physical perfection, to be defined by each claimant according to his own standard."

MILL IS WILLING also to legislate against letting anyone pursue the business of being a pimp, or

running a gambling house. He would impose all sorts of restrictions on the sale of alcoholic drinks. Again, he uses some telling phrases. He insists that fornication and gambling must be tolerated. But it is permissible for the state to legislate against anyone who "makes it his occupation for subsistence or pecuniary gains, to promote *what society and the State consider to be an evil.*" The interest of dealers in strong drinks is to promote intemperance, which "*is a real evil and justifies the State in imposing restrictions and requiring guarantees* which, but for that justification, would be infringements of legitimate liberty." He approves besides of taxes on "strong drinks" because this is a commodity "*that the consumers can best spare*", even though he opposes limiting the number of pubs because that would be treating the labouring classes "as children or savages."

What makes Mill confident that he is not being inconsistent is his commitment to a particular conception of what constitutes a civilised human life which he assumes that every civilised man must share. He takes it for granted that a good life means a day of leisure during the week; not getting drunk; not making love for money; accepting certain standards of decent conduct, and a good deal more. Even where he explicitly and genuinely intends to reject paternalism, he sees no difficulty about legislating against certain practices because he never doubts what the commitment to civilisation implies. If he were living now, he would certainly distinguish our contemporary critics of censorship (most of whom evidently wish to upset what had until recently been the accepted standards of civilised life) from the political or philosophical dissidents of the sort he wanted to protect. And he would be at one with an even more pugnacious individualist, George Orwell, who in his essay on Dali and "No Orchids for Miss Blandish" strongly denounced literature that advocates or insinuates a corruption of morality.

The kind of unselfconsciousness that made Mill's inconsistency pass unnoticed has become impossible now because almost all of our old habits of thought have been challenged. The problem that individualists have to consider today may be illustrated by the following story.

A COMMUNITY that is Ostraban by descent has through a set of odd circumstances come to live apart from the parent country of Ostrabans. The New Ostrabans have lived for some 300 years in a different physical environment. They have in the course of this isolation developed quite a different style of life. Whereas the Old Ostrabans are very reserved and quiet, the New Ostrabans are ostentatious and bumptious. They consider it

bad manners not to try to shout down everyone else in the room. Some curious developments in religious doctrine have led them to believe that the souls of children are taken over by the devil if children are disciplined before the age of fifteen. Their children are therefore permitted to kick their elders whenever and wherever the impulse takes them, to throw anything at hand, to break windows in houses, or commit any other violent act without reproof. There is a community fund for repairing such damages which are considered part of the normal routine of life. The New Ostrabans also consider it indecent to walk about with rubbish in their pockets or handbags and if they find any such bits of rubbish about them as they walk down the pavement, they just chuck it out. They have developed also a very special notion of the arts—all the Old Ostraban art is forbidden to the children as immoral. The art they favour obeys only one rule—it must be incoherent; it must preach the virtues of violating truth, honesty and chastity; and it must make an enormous noise. Indeed noise plays a fundamental part in this New Ostraban culture—silence or anything approaching silence is regarded as a sign of utmost wickedness or as a perversion.

Now this community of New Ostrabans decides for some reason to return to the homeland and claim their rights as Ostrabans. Racially they are much purer than those that remained at home because they have excluded anyone who married an outsider. The New Ostrabans are in fact warmly welcomed. They are hardworking and pay their rent. Employers easily take them on and landlords readily give them rooms. And so they settle in. But being tough pure Ostrabans, they are adamant about preserving their chosen manner of conducting themselves.

When they first arrive, they live together and it soon becomes evident that their part of Ostraban, the capital, is unbearable for an Old Ostraban. Gradually the newcomers find their way to other parts of the homeland. It then appears that even one family of New Ostrabans can totally disrupt any community it enters. Where two or three New Ostraban families settle, it becomes impossible for the old residents to go on living anything like what they would consider a bearable life. Yet the New Ostrabans do not break any laws because there are no laws forbidding such behaviour. Behaviour such as theirs (in any but exceptional cases) had been unknown in Old Ostraban, which believed fervently in individual freedom and disdained to regulate anyone's behaviour. Nevertheless it is perfectly clear that the New Ostrabans will totally destroy what was once supposed to be

civilisation in Ostraban. The Old Ostrabans gathered in great conclaves to consider the problem. But just how they could contain this disruption of their life without giving up their devotion to their fundamental moral belief in liberty, they could not discover.

A PARALLEL STORY of a somewhat different sort points to the same moral. It is of another kind of invasion of Ostraban. As the doors are open to everyone, Ostraban suddenly finds itself with a large group of people who have nothing of their own that they wish to do, and adamantly refuse to run their own lives. They have all had a spell in the army and they loved it. They have decided that the worries and frustrations of making their own decisions and seeing them go wrong is more than they can bear. They want someone else to decide for them (just as in the army) what they are to do from the moment of rising to retiring, what they should wear and eat, where they should sleep and live and whom they should see. They want no responsibility whatsoever beyond executing orders, quite precise orders, leaving them in no doubt about what they should do here and now.

They are determined to have the government resolve for them permanently what the army had done temporarily. Moreover, as the sight of other men living differently and making their own lives for themselves disturbs their serenity, they want the government to decide everything for everyone. They are not given to violence; they are not revolutionaries. But whenever a public decision has to be made they exercise whatever influence or power they have to choose whatever alternative will further the sort of life they want. And again the Ostrabans find that they have no arguments against these foreigners.

THE STORY IN BOTH CASES is about a community that suddenly finds the life it values threatened by strangers. But whereas the ancient Greeks, who were very clear about their commitment to a certain view of civilisation, called such invaders "barbarians" and tried to drive them out, the Ostrabans are helpless. They had understood themselves to have no moral commitment because they were dedicated to leaving each man free to live as he chose. To restrict the invaders in any fashion seems to violate their deepest convictions. Yet if they do not make any such restriction, even deeper convictions (though hitherto never expressed) will also be violated.

The moral is that the commitment to liberty cannot be divorced from a commitment to some conception of what constitutes a civilised life.

This is a moral conception, and will necessarily affect the laws. Moreover, the commitment to liberty is as much a moral commitment as a commitment to monogamy or to fidelity in marriage. About this the ancients had no doubt. But modern individualists, haunted as they are by imaginary perils of medieval obscurantism, parade their belief in liberty as an amoral idea, which obliges no one to believe anything (in the manner of Bentham). Or else they try to secure liberty by denying (in the fashion of Rousseau) what makes it both valued and difficult to preserve—the uniqueness of every human being, which cannot be denied or destroyed without renouncing rationality.

The problem that modern individualism has now to face is not how to purify the law of morality, but how to distinguish between two different moral commitments intrinsic to the law. One is a commitment to the character of the association regulated by the law; the other, to one of the many patterns of civilisation compatible with this kind of association.

THE DISTINCTION PROPOSED by Professor Michael Oakshott—between a Civil Association and an Enterprise—makes the character of the first commitment clear. The law in a civil association is designed not to impose any pattern of life on its members, or to direct their activities, or to make them good, healthy, or wise, but to set conditions that will make it possible for them to associate and yet to pursue their private projects. The concern with “protecting privacy” that is often expressed by individualists is a concern with preventing the civil association that they prefer from degenerating into an enterprise. In an enterprise, as in a hospital or a factory, the only criterion for a good rule is whether it promotes the objectives of the enterprise. Privacy may be allowed or denied only in so far as it promotes or hinders the achievement of these objectives. In a civil association, however, there is no such objective.

To conceive of law in connection with a civil association is not, however, to sever it from morality. It is, rather, to endow it with a specified moral character. This moral character is not a criterion for judging the law; it is nothing outside of, or distinct from, the law but just as intrinsic to the law as rationality is to human beings. Those who have likened the law of a “free” society, that is, a civil association, to “an Umpire” are not, as they sometimes suppose, denying that morality is relevant to law. An umpire cannot enforce the rules of a game without knowing what game is being played. To say that the law should be framed in a manner appropriate to a civil association, rather than to

an enterprise, is to designate what game is being played. In a civil association the game is a curious one where there are no goals to be scored or points to be won. It is rather a Game of games, where the object is to leave each player free to select and change his game as he pleases. The conditions he must observe in making these choices will be specified by the rules of the Game.

WHAT COMPLICATES matters is that the rules of a civil association reflect what are accepted as standards of civility among the members of that association. These standards reflect common preferences for *living* in a certain manner (as opposed to being *associated* in a certain manner). All civil associations, to the degree that they are purely so, refrain from treating their members as employees or children. But each does so in a different fashion.

In other words, agreement on the character and desirability of a civil association does not remove the need to make a further specification about the *standards of civility* in that particular association. It is here that differences commonly ascribed to national character, temperament, climate, or race, become evident. Civil associations may be noisy or quiet, chaotic or orderly, businesslike or easy-going, excitable or stolid. What is considered a minimum of cleanliness in one place may feel like a hospital régime to another. A civil association may take great pains to cultivate public gardens or have none at all. It may relish large, fast motor-cars or ban them altogether. Its members may consider it indecent to walk about the roads without a hat, or decent to do so in a bikini. Whether conduct is regarded as indecent or decent does not make it a proper subject for legal regulation. That is a separate question involving considerations of another kind.

Any community of people who live together in harmony have come to agree on what is decent and indecent, reasonable and unreasonable, offensive and inoffensive, negligent and careful. This agreement will be reflected in all the laws whether about abortion or compensation for injury. Standards of civility are involved in questions as apparently technical as the location of an airport. For what is considered to be an efficient location will depend on whether “rural beauty” or “silence” is given precedence over speedy travel. The question that always has to be asked is the one answered by Pericles: “Are we people who pride ourselves more on this than on that?” Are we more concerned with getting to the remotest corners of the world faster than anyone else? or with being able to stay at home in peace?

WHEN THE MEMBERS of a Civil Association come to consider or reconsider the conditions that they

wish to subscribe to in their association with one another, they cannot avoid speaking in terms of standards of civility however unselfconsciously. There is no necessity to cultivate selfconsciousness about such standards. Where there is the kind of consensus that prevailed in Pericles' real or imaginary Athens the question need never be raised. But though they may never need to be invoked, some standards of civility will nevertheless shape the particular forms taken by the laws.

In a modern individualist society (where there is likely to be a greater variety and greater possibility of disagreement about the standards of civility), it may be almost impossible to consider any question without encountering disagreement about the standards of civility. Not only the standards, but the considerations relevant to judging then will be questioned. Consequently, what constitutes the civility of any particular civil association in the modern world is a far more open and difficult issue than it is supposed to have been in ancient Athens. But it does not follow that where people have been living together for some time, and have a history in common, there will be no grounds for discussion and agreement. These grounds will be different from those invoked in ancient or Christian communities, and the disagreement will be sharper than in communities where the moral consensus is broader and less subject to rapid change. But why should that make it impossible to reach an agreement in the manner that has become traditional in constitutional governments? The usual rules governing political discourse will apply; the uncertainty will be of the same kind; and so will the need to decide.

THE DISTINCTION DRAWN so sharply by Hobbes between the authority and the desirability of laws has now to be supplemented by another distinction in connection with the desirability of laws. A legislative proposal may be desirable, or otherwise, depending on whether it is compatible with preserving a civil association. This has to do with the manner of constituting authority, and the conditions set for the exercise of authority. If a law is found desirable on this score, there remains another question—whether it is desirable in terms of the accepted standards of civility. What will satisfy the Ostrabans may offend the New Ostrabans, though both may be equally committed to a civil association.

The great difficulty in a civil association is to distinguish regulations made to preserve standards of civility from the regulations appropriate to a theocracy. Much of the effort to dissociate Law from Morality arises from the misconception

that any regulation of civility is a theocratic regulation and hence inappropriate in a civil association. But opposition to theocratic regulations, which is certainly implied in a commitment to a civil association, is a moral commitment. The further commitment to a particular kind of civility is also a moral commitment, though distinct from any desire to enforce the rules of a theocracy.

To recognise that every community has a moral commitment, both in the sense of wishing to preserve its character of a civil association and in the sense of wanting to preserve the peculiar character of this civil association, is to be neither conservative nor revolutionary. To admit that the law is a moral institution may just as easily—all too easily—be put into the service of a revolutionary as a conservative doctrine. If we recall the circumstances under which Hobbes and Bentham wrote, it becomes obvious that those who denied that the state was a moral institution included some who were concerned to neutralise what they considered dangerous revolutionary doctrines as well as reformers wishing to jostle their society out of its established ways. In other words, to say that the law is intrinsically moral is neither advocating certain laws, nor defending “the wisdom of the ages”, nor fomenting revolution. It is saying only that when a number of men recognise the same authority, if they share a communal life, they will (whether or not they realise it) hold in common certain ideas about what is suitable, just, right, proper, seemly, decent. They want not only to be a community, and not only a community that is a civil association, but a civil association with a particular kind of civility.

TO FORMULATE THE DISTINCTION between the civility of a civil association and that of a theocracy is certainly not easy. But it is helpful to consider the distinction between the considerations appropriate to a civil association and those appropriate to standards of civility as analogous to the distinction between the rules of grammar and the canons recognised by critics and writers for what constitutes good usage in the language. Both differ from the rules of a theocracy in that they indicate nothing about what is to be said nor give anything like certain or infallible directions for speaking the language. But whereas the rules of grammar describe the structure of the language within which variations are possible, the standards laid down by critics give a general idea of the elegance, humour, irony, or clarity to aim at. It should be noticed, however, that if we look at grammar (not with the philistine eyes of some contemporary linguists, but with a sensitivity to the peculiar flavour of a language that comes of

knowing its literature) it becomes obvious that even the grammatical structure of language does more than indicate the structure to which those using the language must conform in order to be understood. It is intimately connected with a manner of expression peculiar to that language, that shapes the manner of thinking in that language. In the same fashion, the rules of a civil association cannot fail to reflect the standards of civility that characterise it.

Men speaking the same language have in common not only a grammar but also certain notions of what constitutes good and bad usage. In other words, a shared language involves more than a shared grammar. But this cannot, any more than a grammar, dictate what to say. In the same way, a commitment to the freedom of each individual "to live his own life in his own way" that characterises a civil association rests on a view of what constitutes a civilised life and what conditions have to be enforced generally to preserve such a civilisation. This is entirely compatible with the variety intrinsic to a free society.

HOW DIFFERENTLY moral considerations may enter into deliberations on law may be illustrated by considering possible responses to a question about marriage laws. It may be thought necessary to make or amend such laws because the cohabitation of a man and woman is believed to have a sacrosanct character and should neither take place nor be dissolved without due recognition of this character. This way of understanding marriage is very likely to be present in a theocracy. But it may also be part of the civility of a civil association. Or marriage may be thought of as a contract, much like any other contract, which the government will protect if certain conditions are observed, or allow to be broken if certain conditions are not met. Or the cohabitation of a man and a woman may be thought of as an act of friendship which may take place under an unlimited variety of conditions of no concern to any but the two persons involved. This might mean that children would be entirely the responsibility of the parents, however they may choose to understand that responsibility. If, however, it is thought desirable to set up public orphanages and other public institutions for bringing up such children, the civil association would be adulterating its character by turning itself into a nurse-maid as well as a rule-maker. To avoid doing so, it may be thought desirable to regulate the conditions of cohabitation, even though the relationship of lovers is understood as one of friendship. In this case, laws regulating the conditions of cohabitation

will have been inspired by a concern for personal freedom, rather than by an attempt to impose any particular pattern of conduct.

But in all such discussions of proposed changes in the laws, the issue is never: Should the Law deal with Morality? but—What is our understanding of civility? Does it include the belief that the conditions under which the members of the association become lovers, or choose to live together, are of *no concern* to anyone but themselves? Or does it include a conception of personal responsibility that excludes love-making or cohabitation at random? Even if the latter is chosen, nothing follows necessarily about what *laws* are desirable. There is no necessary connection between what is considered civil conduct and what is considered an appropriate subject to include in the public concern.

It is a gross confusion to suppose that a judgment to the effect that conduct is "indecent" carries an obligation to endorse legislation to that effect. It may be decided that although the reigning civility distinctly does not condone random cohabitation, any law designed to set up conditions of cohabitation or love-making might be too costly in financial terms, or would entail surveillance incompatible with a civil association, or would be impossible to enforce in any case. If it is concluded that no such law should be made or preserved for whatever reasons, it does not follow that Morality has been excluded from the domain of Law. The decision is a *moral* decision. Considerations other than moral may have entered into the deliberation, *e.g.* about the cost of enforcement (though considerations about the compatibility of enforcement with a civil association are certainly moral). But the deliberation was set in motion and concluded by moral ideas—ideas about the kind of association being governed by the law and about the civility that distinguishes that association. Apart from rules designating which side of the road shall be used by motorists, it is difficult to think of any subject entirely free of such considerations.

TO RECOGNISE THAT MORALITY is not an object, adjunct, auxiliary, or criterion of law, but intrinsic to it, is in no way incompatible with a regard for the freedom of individuals to make their own lives as they see fit. On the contrary, recognising that a commitment to freedom in this sense is a moral commitment is essential to preserving freedom against its most deadly enemies: those who insidiously spread confusion by undermining all standards of civilisation. It must, however, be recognised that all good things cannot be had at once. If a free community values its civilisation, it will neither be unanimously agreed on what is compatible with it, nor

make all newcomers feel equally at home. In a community that has a sense of its own identity, even where there is no danger whatsoever of persecution or legal prosecution for deviations, some will feel the pinch of society more than others. But it should not be forgotten that they may feel the pinch because they prefer *less* rather than more *liberty*, and *more* rather than less *order*. A civil association allows for a great variety of pursuits and enterprises, but the variety cannot be infinite. No community can renounce all limits without renouncing civilisation.

HOW CAN THESE LIMITS be preserved without destroying the character of a civil association? This is the difficult question that must be answered in any consideration of proposals to alter or retain legal arrangements. Still, that cannot absolve us from answering or at least considering questions about standards of civility. Our standards of civility are less fixed, more varied, and more difficult to define than they have been in other times and places. This means that we will be more aware of the possibility that what one community considers suitable will not be found so elsewhere. But those who accuse our ancestors of being less devoted to liberty because their notions of decency differ from ours display intolerance and rigidity. They refuse to see that what has changed, or at least may have changed, is not the love of liberty. In fact there is good reason to believe that the love of liberty has seriously declined of late. Our ancestors had different standards of civility. It should be pos-

sible among lovers of liberty to take account of changes in the standards of civility in amending laws without spreading calumny about those whose notions of civility are different.

The agreement on which contemporary civility is based is much more complicated than that described by Pericles. To discover this agreement among men of highly developed individuality who recognise no non-human criteria for human activities is an exceedingly difficult task. Certainly it is easy to fall into a manner of discouraging appropriate to a theocracy or a tribe or an enterprise, rather than to a civil association. As soon as that happens, those who wish to preserve the character of civil association will object, and rightly so.

But to state these objections in the form of an attack on linking morality and law is not only misleading. It makes nonsense of law. For the concept of law is a *moral* concept. What is always at issue in any discussion about law is communal morality. And this has two distinct aspects. One refers to preserving the character of a civil association, the other to preserving standards of civility. In order to protect a civil association from being destroyed—that is, in order to protect the freedom of individuals to live their own lives—the pertinent question to ask is not: “Is this an attempt to enforce moral standards?”, but—“Are the moral ideas embodied here compatible with a civil association?” The answer will be no more (and no less) certain or reasonable than the answer to any other political question. But any attempt to escape from such uncertainty by decontaminating the law from morality will certainly destroy law.

Errata

for “now” read “gone”
 for “for God’s sake” read “for my sake”
 for “affection” “sincere esteem”,
 at the end of the note leave a large space to fill
 “with my love”

after “see you later” insert “farewell”

delete “the others”
 delete “me.”

Christopher Levenson

Alan Brownjohn

Reflections on Learning

*Navies rust and nations perish
Currency is never sure
But Alma Mater she shall flourish
While the sexes shall endure
Alma Mater, ave salve
Floreas in secula.*

(W. H. AUDEN: *The Dance of Death*)

Only a self-deceiving fool says he thoroughly
Loathes, all the way down, his old school.

I regard any attitude which tries to reject
Self-love entirely as a lot of lies;

Because hating what, even unwillingly, you *were*
For eight long years just can't be true.

If you're sitting on the Southern near Hither Green, my own
Old school can be fairly clearly seen:

Mostly built about 1920 in red brick, she stands
Topping a hilly London space with plenty

Of trees and grass round her yet, among which
We tobogganed in '47, against the rules, when the ground

Was a glacier. Come the new technology, they built
In about '57 a swish new laboratory,

But *I* recall the old Sixth Science Room, from which
You could see, standing on a chair, except on some very gloom

-y day, our sister girls' school, and its netball courts,
Following with distant lust, the whirls

And pirouettes of our "sisters" at their ploys; quite
Interesting to us, as our place was all boys.

In a year or two at most, Daddy (no *Mummy*) School,
Your education was off at the root. But the cheerful baddy

Who taught us no physics and many lewd jokes
Worms through to me now, in a strong, crude

Irreverence towards revered institutions,
While the ceremonious assemblies I always feared

Reading the lesson at, as a prefect, stay with me yet
—For hymns with a left-wing Head in which one might detect

Christian Socialist overtones: "When wilt thou save the *People*,/
O Lord of Mercy, when?/ Not crowns and thrones

But men?" Thus, almost indefinitely could the list
Continue, each item an irrelevant memory

Unconnected with learning, or character, or other modes of becoming
A respectable citizen for earning

Money for the family in insurance, or banking, or computers
(And well before the end would come skill in . . . table-tennis

On two desks put end-to-end.) But: disobedient
Physical risks, the ways of young women, a tend

-ency to relish disgusting wit, and a convinced left-wing
Disposition are good examples of what remains. It

Looks sadly as if it confirms the saying of our "de-schoolers",
That you pick up more despite lessons than during;

And though, like a navy and like the pound, the old school
Will soon be going down into a mixed comprehensive (ave

And salve, Alma Mater, your future is unisex, apparently)
You will flourish in me and in your other wrecks

Through their middle-age, and age, if not for what you wanted
To instil, nothing honourable or civic or sage,

But for the love of doing otherwise than you most
Earnestly desired: your best achievement, much above

The little Latin and the less R.E.

And in this way I do think
You actually taught me the things that *really* taught me. . . .

Don't Mistake Her

Don't mistake her for that linnet
who shook in your arms last night,
fluttering and tender
in its surrender.

Look: she stretches to yawning height,
with sure hands, draws the sheets tight,
throws a black and white spread
on the straightened bed.

Her spikes put the street in its place
as she clatters forth to face
others, standing over
the desk, takes cover

all day long behind her owl mask.
Fluttering, tripping at dusk
as you are drawing home
she comes back in time.

Florence Elon

THEATRE

Shakespeare in Bondage

By John Weightman



"OTHERS abide our question. Thou art free. . . ." For Matthew Arnold, Shakespeare may have out-topped criticism, but Edward Bond seems almost to have a grudge against him. Two or three years ago, Mr Bond rewrote *King Lear*, as if possessed by an itch to make it even more barbaric and grotesque and dark than it

is in the original. Now he has had a go at Shakespeare's life, under the title *Bingo* which, in its aggressive modernity, seems to imply:

"None of your stupid bardolatry for me! The reality behind the poetry was a sordid financial gamble, as prosaic as anything that happens in a suburban bingo-hall. In Shakespeare's Merry England, peasants were robbed of their rights through the enclosures, vagrants were flogged or hanged, and what did Shakespeare do about it? Nothing. The evidence suggests that, in later life, he even sided with the oppressors through the need to defend the income he was living on in retirement. But we may suppose that, having written the plays, he was sensitive enough to develop a bad conscience and eventually to commit suicide. He realised before dying that he had done nothing to improve the world. . . ."

I may seem to be reading a lot into the single word *Bingo* or into the sub-title "*Scenes of money and death*", but in fact this is not only the basic message of the play, as it is performed at the Royal Court. Mr Bond spells out the implications in the Introduction to the printed text,¹ where he writes:

. . . I want to protect the play from petty criticism. It is based on the material historical facts so far as

they're known, and on psychological truth so far as I know it. The consequences that follow in the play follow from the facts, they're not polemical inventions. Of course, I can't insist that my description of Shakespeare's death is true. I'm like a man who looks down from a bridge at the place where an accident has happened. The road is wet, there's a skid mark, the car's wrecked, and a dead man lies by the road in a pool of blood. I can only put the various things together and say what probably happened. Orthodox critics usually assume that Shakespeare would have driven a car so well that he would never have had an accident. My account rather flatters Shakespeare. If he didn't end in the way shown in the play, then he was a reactionary blimp or some other fool. The only more charitable account is that he was unaware or senile.

According to my understanding of the use of English, this passage, which is typical of the general tenor of the Introduction, is so inaccurately phrased as to throw doubt on the whole enterprise. Mr Bond's manifesto shows intense feeling about the horrors of the world, both in the past and the present, but if—as is probable—language is the only means we have of understanding ourselves and improving matters, to throw it about in his slapdash way is merely to increase unreason instead of discouraging it.

Like many contemporary artists, he is responding to the confusion of the world by excitability and muddle. Here, he is jumping to the conclusion that his interpretation of the "facts", because he happens to believe in it, is non-polemical. He says later on: ". . . every artist often feels that what he has created is 'right'. . . ." To which one could reply: Not only every artist, mate, but every single mother's son! It is surely an elementary point that, in the field of speculation, consequences only follow from "facts" through the operation of the intelligence, temperament, general conditioning, etc. of the person speculating. In matters of the mind, everything is polemical.

The materiality of so-called material facts is very limited. Shakespeare's will, for instance, with its famous reference to the second-best bed, is a fact in so far as the document exists, but there is no authoritative way of reading it as evidence about the poet's relationship with his wife,

¹ *Bingo*. By EDWARD BOND. Eyre Methuen, £1.80, paper 75p.

because the personal and social context cannot be reconstituted with certainty. Similarly with the financial documents, which do not necessarily point to the conclusions that Mr Bond draws. The analogy of the wrecked car and the dead man in a pool of blood is totally unjustified; Mr Bond has no such indications to work on. The peculiarity about Shakespeare is that the information concerning the life is so meagre as to defy even tentative interpretation, while the content of the work is so multifarious as not to be attributable to any obvious "personality." This, I take it, is what the opening line of Arnold's sonnet means. If Mr Bond is not being ironical when he says his account flatters Shakespeare, he has an unusual concept of flattery. The reduction of a mysteriously universal linguistic genius to a dourly monochrome and, to my mind, not tremendously interesting particular, might instead be called an impertinence. Not that I am criticising impertinence as such; it is often a necessary element in creativity; but it can work to good or bad effect.

IT IS TRUE THAT Mr Bond to some extent anticipates the kind of objection I am making by going on to say:

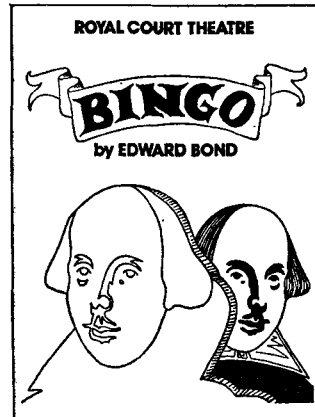
... I admit that I'm not interested in Shakespeare's true biography in the way a historian might be. Part of the play is about the relationship between any writer and his society.

Then why not declare at once: "This is a free, imaginative treatment of inadequate facts, on which someone else might legitimately impose a quite different interpretation"?

Why have so many moderns the desire to blur the contours between reasonable assessment of evidence and the independent operation of fiction? Hochhuth slanders Winston Churchill, Jean-Paul Sartre plays brilliant games with Flaubert's biography, Ken Russell messes about with Tchaikovsky, Norman Mailer weaves a web of "factoids" around Marilyn Monroe, and the Théâtre du Soleil makes a simplistic hash of the French Revolution. The only explanation I can think of is that, in the absence of absolute truth, some people cannot bear the strain of "not knowing for certain." They assume impatiently that relative truth is tedious and unimportant whereas, in human affairs, it is all we have to go by. After the death of God, these little post-Nietzschean gods want to invent their own certainty and to transfer it from art, where it might be valid, to history, where it confuses the issue. They thus betray humanism, with or without talent. Mr Bond seems to me to be following suit, in spite of his rather surprising final assertion:

But rational processes will be brought back into society and problems can be solved instead of being compounded.

Not, I should say, by irrational prose such as this.



HOWEVER, authors may write questionable manifestos and still produce good works of art. What is our reaction to the play, *Bingo*? Well, if Mr Bond is really suggesting, as he seems to be at times, that Shakespeare ought to have

been a "committed" writer in the modern sense, he is surely making a rather anti-historical demand. Shakespeare was outspoken enough, and free enough from contemporary prejudice in most matters, to have remained readable and significant up to the present day. What more can we ask of him? If ever an Englishman did his social duty, it was Shakespeare, by producing that astounding wealth of poetry. In raising the question of the Enclosures, Mr Bond reminds me of Sartre, the great apostle of commitment, who keeps harping on the fact that Flaubert ought to have protested publicly against the repression of the Commune. It is true that Flaubert, the man, would have been a nobler character if he had not shown some of the usual bourgeois reactions to the collapse of the Second Empire; but Flaubert, the writer, had composed *Madame Bovary*, which is more than most 19th-century bourgeois did, and the novel contains a whole critique of society. As for Shakespeare, perhaps he was a "great" man only when he was writing poetry. He may have begun worrying obtusely about his investments as soon as he put his pen down (although, being prejudiced in his favour, I would not imagine so); or he may honestly not have known what to do about the Enclosures.

To quote a third case: we have a great deal of evidence about Tolstoy's life, and he tried hard to be committed. But it seems clear that he was much more successful, coherent and admirable as an artist than he was as a man with immediate social convictions. The function of art is not the same as the function of action, and each artist has to be left to decide for himself how he is going to distribute his energies. Some need the experience

of social action in order to produce good art. Others do not, and there is little point in telling those in the second category that they ought to take a stand on particular issues, apart from fulfilling their ordinary duties as citizens, in the fumbling, approximate way most of us do. Shakespeare, writing his plays while, all around him, thieves were being hanged and bears bated, was not simply fiddling while Rome burned. Or rather, Rome is always burning, in the sense that evil is always present to a greater or lesser degree. After all, Mr Bond himself has wasted time on art by writing this play about an extinct social situation, instead of campaigning on some contemporary issue.

If he feels there is a genuine case against Shakespeare, he should do what Sartre has done, i.e. renounce art in favour of politics. "*En face d'un enfant qui meurt de faim, 'La Nausée' ne fait pas le poids*", Sartre has said. I understand the humanitarian emotion behind the remark—and all the more vividly since I remember starvation in England at the time of the Depression and the soup-kitchens—but intellectually the statement doesn't make much sense. What is the point of the child welfare, if the world does not contain masterpieces like *La Nausée*? One of God's truer observations, before he died, was that man does not live by bread alone. *La Nausée* would never have been written if Sartre had waited first for the world to be purged of social evil.

IF WE FORGET ABOUT the historical Shakespeare, *Bingo* presents us with the portrait of a playwright in his mid-fifties who, for reasons unknown, has retired from London to Stratford. He sits almost silent in his garden, while the local life revolves around him.

I thought at first that we were going to have a study of the elderly artist as empty husk, after total expression of his possibilities. It is a fascinating problem to know what a writer would have left to think about, after composing a series of transcendent masterpieces. Would he spend his time re-perusing his own works, since all other reading-matter would be inferior? Or would he mutely contemplate the Absurd, on which all

language fails to impinge? Sir John Gielgud seemed to be taking the second course, as he gazed into the middle distance with a look of distinguished forbearance. But it slowly transpires that the character is having a sort of nervous breakdown because of his new awareness of the pressure of evil. His wife and daughter are harpies, corrupted by the money he has earned for them. A pauper girl is whipped and hanged, and her corpse is left in place like a monument. His local "friends" are realistic landowners keen to introduce new farming methods at the expense of the peasants. A former London colleague visits him to borrow money and spews out a lot of jealous bile. All this human horror contrasts with the purity of the first snowfall and the flight of a white swan. The playwright in despair takes poison and dies, while his daughter, frantic to get at his will, batters on his bedroom door.

The only part of this I found convincing was Ben Jonson's visit, a nice little vignette of literary bitchiness, performed with jovial venom by Arthur Lowe, and which could have stood on its own as a satirical sketch. Mr Bond is no poet, but he undoubtedly has a sardonic gift. For the rest, the language and psychology were far too simple and naïve to express the dilemma of a man who must have been reflecting on the various aspects of the problem of evil all his life. The pathetic fallacy of the snow and the swan was brought in sentimentally, as if Mr Bond did not realise that all major writers—and Shakespeare especially—manipulate the pathetic fallacy without ultimately believing in it, since it is in fact a fallacy. Snow may arouse emotions; but in itself it is only a modality of water, a neutral substance of the universe. A swan is not pure; like man himself, it is part of the cannibalistic system of organic nature; but it can at times be used incidentally as an *image* of purity, no more.

Mr Bond is obviously obsessed with evil, and this gives him a certain seriousness; but I don't think he has worked out, or sensed, a convincing system of relative evils, and this makes him artistically confused. What about re-reading Shakespeare who, on this score, is still quite up-to-date, and perhaps even definitely in advance of most of us?

AMERICAN CHRONICLE

Words in Washington

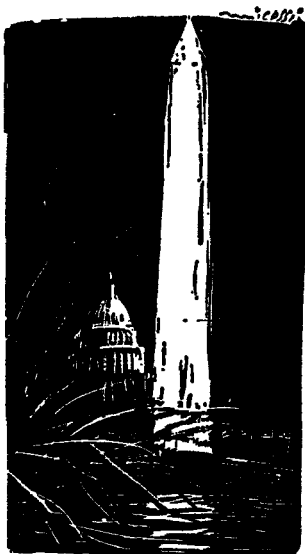
By Stefan Kanfer

"Watch what we do, not what we say"

ATTORNEY-GENERAL JOHN MITCHELL

"IDEA: A lieutenant, a pianist who lives for his art. He constructs a mute piano with boards taken from packing cases. He plays six to eight hours a day. He hears every note. In certain passages, his face lights up. 'This is what we shall all be doing in the end.'"

ALBERT CAMUS, *Notebook V*



IS LANGUAGE the soil or the crop? Do lies grow larger in the German tongue? Could Stalin have flourished in Gaelic or Swahili? Is exaggeration endemic in the Arabic declensions, or in the Cantonese locution?

There was a time (not so long ago) when such questions assumed a rhetorical character. Of course Hitler could not have happened across his native borders; naturally the Moscow trials could not have occurred in another arena. But today we are not so certain. The scourges of Viet Nam, of Biafra and Nigeria, of Belfast and the Middle East, the lethal hypocrisies of the United Nations (and, more specifically, of India) have left the world without a reliable moral compass.

And yet in the face of all this I feel certain that Watergate, with all that the generic label implies, could not have happened anywhere but Seventies America. Given a more open society it would not have occurred at all. Given a more hermetic, a more repressive régime, we should not have discovered it. No, Watergate is no by-blow of American history, no aberration of the historical impulse. It is the legitimate heir to all that immediately preceded it. Its ancestors include Presidents Dwight Eisenhower and Lyndon Johnson, the military class, the politicians of every stripe—as well as the battalions of all the individuals and organisations who have not learned the potential for destruction implicit in every vocabulary. The entire scandal is, at bottom, a failure of expression, a sometimes accidental but more often planned attempt to choke the life out of words and the words out of life.

Despite the claims, Watergate did not begin when a guard noticed a suspiciously open door in the Watergate Hotel. It started long ago in a more innocent America, before the nation became afflicted with the degenerative ailment of paranoia. It is impossible to trace the ultimate antecedent, just as it is impracticable to prune the family tree back to Adam. Still, we can examine a few of the foundering fathers. President Eisenhower was the man of vast and hidden strengths, a negotiator nonpareil (Dr Kissinger, after all, never had to deal with Viscount Montgomery and General de Gaulle). But neither West Point nor World War II, nor the Republican Party, nor his businessmen-associates, ever stimulated him to develop a decent prose style or an original phrase. He would parrot certain unassailable mottos of the Motherhood-and-Flag persuasion:

"Our problem is not only keeping ourselves strong, and by strong I don't mean militarily, I mean spiritually, intellectually, scientifically, economically and militarily [sic]."

SUCH BANALITIES soon assumed the tactility of fog. They surrounded the listener who groped his way for a while and then, like the speaker, got utterly lost. America no longer paid attention to the Presidential mumble. Citizens perked up at the sound of the reassuring timbre, but they stopped listening to the words. We had come a long, winding way from the cantankerous but lucid Harry S. (for nothing) Truman style (perhaps the best portion of Merle Miller's best-selling memoir of HST is the book's title: *Plain Speaking*). When the Eisenhower style was in full fig, grown men spoke of "newkyular threats"; and Oliver Jensen composed his classic parody of the President entitled "The Gettysburg Address in Eisenhowerese". "Fourscore and seven

years ago" became "I haven't checked these figures but 87 years ago, I think it was, a number of individuals organised a governmental set-up here in this country" . . . and ran down to "all of us here, under God, that is, the God of our choice, shall beef up this idea about freedom and liberty and those kind of arrangements, and that government of all individuals, by all individuals and for the individuals shall not pass out of the world-picture."¹ It should be added that Eisenhower was not essentially different from Warren G. Harding in the 1920s: "We must strive for normalcy to reach stability."

HOW BENIGN IT ALL SEEMS NOW, the slack, errant metaphors, the earnest inexactitudes. What harm could they have really done, one wonders, what possible damage could have occurred while an honourable, ageing leader fumbled for meaning. One forgets how the legislatures in Ike's time were cowed by Senators Joe McCarthy and Pat McCarran and bullied by Senator Everett Dirksen. One forgets how, in the grayness of thought and diction, Elmer Davis was moved to write his urgent little volume *But We Were Born Free*, reminding his audience that civil liberties were eroding quietly in the mist.

Matters, thoughts, and words were not to improve much in succeeding administrations. John F. Kennedy's celebrated speeches always smacked of the well-prepped valedictorian for whom music is more important than lyrics. Everything was either a balancing act: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask etc. etc."—or a ludicrous exaggeration: "*Ich bin ein Berliner!*" But at their best they had a perceptible purpose; they aimed at meaning, not deception.

IT WAS IN Lyndon Johnson's epoch that we began to hear a revival of the obfuscatory technique. Often it was camouflaged as folksy style, the sort that LBJ employed as a squid uses ink: anti-war colleagues were (to his way of thinkin') "Nervous Nellies." His cadre was as

¹ Such send-ups are a part of the American tradition and correctly imply a history of obfuscation. Dwight Macdonald in his book *Parodies* quotes the H. L. Mencken "Declaration of Independence in American":

"When things get so balled up that the people of a country got to cut loose from some other country, and go it on their own hook, without asking no permission from nobody, excepting maybe God Almighty, then they ought to let everybody know why they done it, so that everybody can see they are not trying to put nothing over on nobody."

But note the difference between Mencken and Jensen. The revamped Declaration is vulgarised but not foggy. The new Gettysburg Address is as unfocussed as an infant's eyes.

"loyal as dawgs." When a Congressman asked him why the US supported an unstable leadership in South Viet Nam, Johnson coyly trotted out the anecdote of a Texas sheriff who, after his appointment, turned out to be a reprobate. "I couldn't get rid of a lawman in Texas," said the President, "how in hell could I cut loose from a foreign head of state?" The listeners nodded sagely, convinced that they had been given the Washington lowdown. His style was pervasive. Here is a quote of ominous significance: "We staff men are like spokes in a wheel, all leading to the center, the President." John Erlichman? H. R. Haldeman? No, just Bill Moyers, LBJ's right hand yes-man during the 1960s. This past year, Moyers could be seen on public television, making excellent observations about the dangers of "blind loyalty" in the Watergate years.

In the '60s, the Federal Government had no exclusive franchise for blurry speaking; it was merely a wholesale distributor. Sociology contributed so much hifalutin' nonsense that Alan Simpson, former President of Vassar College, found his parody of the 23rd Psalm widely quoted:

The Lord is my external-internal integrative mechanism. I shall not be deprived of gratifications for my viscerogenic hungers or my need-dispositions. He motivates me to orient myself towards a nonsocial object with effective significance. He positions me in a nondecisional situation. He maximises my adjustment. . . .

Religion and Business (and, below all, the Military) steadily offered its chrestomathy of hermeneutics, thrusts, overkills, and deterrent gaps. Indeed, for a while every trouble was identified by its "gap": missile, productivity, weapons and, ultimately, generation. In jargon, however, there was no gap. If the staid old government and private sectors could do it, the kids—and those who believed that one is as young as one's vocabulary—could go them one better.

In that glorious period, nothing succeeded like excess. Susan Sontag decided that the white race was the Cancer of History. Abby Hoffman and Jerry Rubin informed middle-class college-students that the Most Oppressed Minority in America was that desperately tyrannised group best identified as—middle-class college students. This opinion was swiftly ratified by numerous professors, another oppressed group later identified by Irving Howe as "guerrillas on tenure." The Pentagon led fresh assaults upon the English language with its fistful of euphemisms. "They are hurting" meant that more of the enemy, including civilians, were killed. "Pacification" and "defoliation" signified the destruction not only of a people but, quite literally, of their country. The Radicals replied with "offing" for

killing; "pig" for anyone in uniform (including firemen and postmen); and, of course, "fascism" for any obstacle encountered on the way to the Revolution. The Women's Liberation movement contributed a variety of gems in what I have called SISPEAK: "Chairperson" "Male Chauvinist Pig", and (my own favourite) "Consciousness Raising."

T. S. ELIOT once observed that one could not undo the damage of a lifetime at the moment of writing. A society cannot undo the *dommage* of decades at an instant in history. As Richard Nixon assumed the Presidency, meaning had reached an ebb—or so we thought. As we now know from the tapes, the descent had miles to go. There was, it appears, hardly a fresh or original mind in Washington. The younger members of the Administration mimicked their elders with a zeal that would do credit to a parrot—or a tape recorder. "At that point in time" and "let me make one thing perfectly clear" served to make young Bob Odle and Bart Porter appear senile at thirty. Yes and no were manifestly outmoded terms. H. R. Haldeman preferred the baroque form of reply:

"I am not sure whether I was or not. I may very well have been."

Nuances were quibbled over in Jamesian fashion, as when John Erlichman tried (vainly) to distinguish between "literal" and "actual." The military and sports establishments found their weary vocabularies adopted wholesale by the Nixon men. Bart Porter considered himself "a team player", John Dean a soldier who had "earned my stripes." J. Edgar Hoover was "a loyal trooper." John Mitchell, the football-coach *manqué*, advised his listeners that "when the going gets tough, the tough get going." Everyone, of course, worried about the Chief "lowering the boom." The Chief was rarely called that; he was rather converted into real estate. Word came from "the Oval office"; and the offer of executive clemency (said Caulfield) came from the "very highest levels of the White House", the first time in history that favours were to be dispensed by architecture. The highest and lowest levels of the White House learned—or perhaps they already knew—that wrong-doing can be made to assume a new character if it is given a fresh coat of jargon. "Intelligence-gathering operations" cloaked the crime of breaking and entering. "Plumbers" meant burglars. "Stroking" meant cheap flattery; "puffing", expensive flattery. "White House horrors" signified Federally-sponsored corruption. "Dirty tricks", "laundered money", "tele-

phone anomalies"—all performed the same function: the severance of words and meaning.

ALL THIS WAS merely prologue. Far more was revealed in the release of White House transcripts. Here, at last, were the off-the-record confidences, the free exchanges of the President and his cadre, when euphemisms—the anaesthesia of language—need not have been used. As the world now knows, the same tired phrases, the identical jargon, found itself employed. All the President's men were advised to "stonewall it" rather than go "the hangout route" *i.e.* tell the truth. Personnel were to work on a "scenario" which would find acceptance with the public. "How do you handle that PR-wise?" asks Nixon. "Rape is inevitable", says Haldeman. The Chief Executive of the United States is continually interrupted in mid-sentence and mid-thought (if one can so dignify his mental processes) by men whose offerings are barren or mean. These conversations have been amply reported and repeated, from the comparison of Watergate with "stripped land" to the offer to give partial information "with the bark off" in order to conceal larger fabrications. Two quotes will suffice, I think, as apertures into the mind and moral climate of the Nixon years. When the President tells John Dean of plans to "screw" the administration opponents, his listener replies "*What an exciting idea.*" (Later, of course, Mr Dean was to find confession a far more attractive source of excitement.)

As for the President, he finds nothing exciting. Here is a fair sample of his ability to formulate plans, to analyse difficulties under pressure:

"I've got to get [inaudible] handle on it so what I am going to do is this—when charges are made—if your charge is made that certain co-conspirators and so forth and so on—out!—even when they are un-indicted—out, out—so that takes care of that. But that is the time to do it, and I am going to say that—oh, I am not going to use your technical terms—" (interruptions follow, and Nixon is never allowed to finish this embroidery).

It all sounds like a stepchild of stream-of-consciousness and, indeed, around the White House you paid your money and you took your Joyce. (Or, if you prefer, e. e. cummings; or Emily Dickinson.) Or so it would appear in a paperback volume entitled *The Poetry of Richard Nixon* in which certain rearrangements (in type, not in words) are offered. Here are some samples:

Take the heat
we had to prick this boil
and take the heat.
now that's what we are
doing here.
We're going to prick this
boil and take the heat.

and:

*I'm the President
of the country—
and I'm going
to get with it
and meet
Italians
and
Germans
and all those others.*

and, as a concession to new times, a rock lyric:

*We are ready—
We are ready to
work out—
to work out—
that's right
let them see we are backing
down a bit*

It was this sort of flabby prosody, this level of circuitous conduct that shocked people far more than the notorious expletives which dot the transcripts. The man whose autobiography is entitled *My Six Crises* could not function in his seventh and final *crise*. His response to frustration was to back and fill and curse. This depressive atmosphere led columnist and mandarin Joseph Alsop to describe the 1972–73 White House as redolent of “the back room of a second-rate advertising agency in a suburb of hell.” I know not what precincts of purgatory Mr Alsop has surveyed. But I am tolerably familiar with the men and procedures in first-rate advertising agencies. I regret to say that some years ago, when I served a term in Young & Rubicam’s firm, I heard much the same euphemisms, and the identical inability to express a thought firmly or to take primary responsibility for telling even a modicum of truth. Moreover, the expletives were those of the Administration, used, I suspect, to give a locker-room aura to what was essentially a eunuchoid task.

IN LOOKING OVER these hellish or mundane transcripts, almost every commentator (including the present deponent) found himself invoking passages from one author. He was not Orwell, not Kafka, nor Gogol or Dostoevsky—despite their premonitory warnings about language and the behaviour of *Homo Bureaucraticus*. It was Lewis Carroll to whom we turned. Only he seemed to paraphrase the lunatic temper of Watergate. Humpty Dumpty assigning a word any definition he pleased, for instance; surely that was Erlichman and Mitchell—even in appearance. The Mock Turtle’s schoolroom recollections of Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision was the iniquitous spirit of the President’s Men.

As for Nixon’s incomprehensible continuance

of the tapings, surely no psychiatrist, no political savant could hope to arrive at a rationale as succinct as the *Looking Glass*: “The horror of that moment,” the King went on, “I shall never, never forget!”

“You will, though,” the Queen said, “If you don’t make a memorandum of it.”

Yet the Carrollian universe is, at bottom, a benign one and its linkage to the Administration is one of surface, not substance. To gaze too long at the comical aspects of Watergate—and there are many—is to forget the cheapness of the Inner Circle, the contempt with which the Chief viewed his electorate (“children” in his words), the secrecy of the public trust, and the near absolutism of power that was ceded to these conscienceless few. It is to forget the below-the-belt, unkind, and prescient portrayal of the President in Philip Roth’s pre-Watergate *Our Gang* (1972). Therein Tricky E. Dixon hypothesises an excuse for a massacre:

“This woman presented herself to Lieutenant Calley for abortion with some kind of note, say, that somebody had written for her in English, and Lieutenant Calley, let’s say, in the heat and pressure of the moment, performed the abortion, during the course of which the woman died. . . . I will disqualify myself as a judge and pass the entire matter on to the Vice President.”

IN SHORT: in the beginning was the word; in the end, the removal from office.

In long: what began as laxness and contempt and fright and euphemism ended in high crimes and misdemeanours, deeds whose dimensions are still unmeasured.

Of late, it has become the fashion to blame moral disintegration on the way of life rather than on the delinquent. To be sure, runs this logic, Nixon is reprehensible—but we live in a devalued society—a nation gets the politicians it deserves. In George Steiner’s jet-high overview, “There can be no doubt that the access to economical and political power of the semi-educated has brought with it a drastic reduction in the wealth and dignity of speech. . . .” And, presumably, of noble action. This is not dissimilar to Tocqueville’s observation that “In regard to language, democratic nations prefer obscurity to labour.” It is difficult to refute these general statements. The absence of a permanent ruling class, of an academy to demonstrate the precision and elegance of language, of a group of universities bent on teaching Americans the proper use of expression—all leads to semantic sloth . . . and to poor administration. Or so it would seem to every moral and ethical aristocrat from Alexander Hamilton to the present analysts.

But I am not so sure. It is worth remembering, I think, that the investigators of Watergate (with

the sole exception of the prophet Sam Ervin) were also consumers of the drastically reduced speech of democracy, and that with the weakened resources of language they still managed to express outrage and to succeed in astringent, corrective action. The two celebrated investigative reporters Messrs Woodward and Bernstein wrote a rather flat-footed account of their work in *All the President's Men*, Chairman Peter Rodino of the House Judiciary Committee had occasional hemidemisemiquavers of *The Godfather*; Senators Hugh Scott, John Rhodes and Barry Goldwater ended their President's political life, yet none of them were remotely suggestive of golden or even brassy orators. Still, all these people and their assistants and their colleagues (and, yes, their listeners), managed to discover and examine and comprehend the transgressions. In this limited democracy with its limited vocabulary they did not let us down. I am not so certain that less limited, more enlightened republics could have done half as well. If Watergate is an end product of the decades that preceded it, so are its antidotes. It will not suffice, I believe, to sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of things, to argue that in contemporary society our words, intentions, and actions are too far gone. Even in the current umber mood I cannot bring myself to reject the statement of Orwell, not hitherto billed as the Pangloss of the Political Condition: "One ought to recognise [he wrote in 1946] that the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language, and that one can probably bring about some improvement by *starting at the verbal end*." (Italics mine).

IN THE YEAR OF OUR FORD, 1974 (could Huxley have anticipated Watergate?), this process seems to have begun. The hearings were remarkably

free of wind and cant. Nixon's final hours were remarkable for their silence, not their apologia. Moreover, the common language of corner-bars and corner-offices appears to have taken an upward turn. No one can even say "perfectly clear" without appearing a fool. As for the man in the White House, he has already started at the verbal end, speaking with painful clarity and openness, if only to disassociate himself from all that went before. Whether this cleansing process will continue is, of course, moot.

Probably the nation is safe for about twenty years—until the next generation of jargon matures. For now, the American people seem pathetically anxious to improve their sorry State. Very often, in their effort, they besiege the nearest available journalist, informing him that they are now fatigued with criticism and negative reporting. They want to know what they can *do* about things. My own answer is to tell them to stop Thinking Big, to cease imagining that they can alter the Corridors of Power in Washington. They ought to begin, I continue, in their own bailiwicks, with their own vocabularies, their own phrases and consequent deeds. This inevitably sounds like preaching—and indeed it is. So I wind things down hurriedly by asking them to identify with that now-forgotten Oxonian who, in 1916, found himself accosted by an old lady in bombasine. "Young man," she fumed, "why aren't you in uniform? What are you doing to save civilisation?"

"Madam," replied the undergraduate with the proper amalgam of terror and decorum. "Madam, I *am* civilisation."

As Richard Nixon might have said (borrowing, for a change, some good words), "I wish I'd said that. . . ." But would he have meant it? And would it have been true? Between the words and the reality falls a shadow.

NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Paris

As Sartre Grows Old...



JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S name has now disappeared from the daily paper *Libération* and from all other remaining publications to which he used to lend his name as *Directeur* in order to shield them from government reprisals. As General de Gaulle once remarked: "One simply does not lock up a man like Sartre. . . ." Yet General de Gaulle

did manage to get a sly blow in, however, addressing him as "*cher Maître*"—as if the revolutionary (who had scornfully refused the Nobel Prize) was a member of the French Academy.

Admittedly Sartre had bemoaned his "impunity" but he nevertheless exploited it to protect revolutionary publications. Still he evidently had no deep wish for his name to be constantly linked with *causes célèbres*. Now, his output much reduced by weariness, age, and an affliction of the optic nerve, Sartre is withdrawing into himself; he no longer wants to be identified with publications which he scarcely reads any more.

Sartre has recently talked to two revolutionaries—Philippe Gavi, the 33-year-old editor of *Libération* and Pierre Vicot, the 28-year-old leader of the "Maoists"—for their book *On a raison de se revolter* just published by Gallimard. One conversation here recorded may well be regarded as Sartre's testament. He looks back to the time when he was a Communist fellow-

traveller, when he dreamt of a libertarian revolution (yet with no hope of seeing more than the first beginnings of it); and he spoke with a disarming candour (and admitted inconsistency) which has not always characterised his political pronouncements.

Talking recently to his biographer, Francis Jeanson, Sartre had outlined his attitude to force: "There is also a type of force which genuine present-day revolutionaries will have to use against those false revolutionaries, the Communists. . . ." On the one hand, as he said: "Force only comes into the picture when all arguments have been exhausted and I have invariably maintained that there are arguments." But then, on the other: "Theoretically I still maintain that force offers the only opening for a society fundamentally different from our own. . . ."

WHAT WOULD this fundamentally different social order look like? To be sure Sartre never explicitly repeated, in the old phrase, that the Movement is everything and the Aim nothing. But he is not so far from that attitude of mind when he says: "I do not know what should be the nature of the new order which will come. Will it be a dictatorship of the proletariat? I do not think so, for dictatorship would be exercised by the representatives of the proletariat, and that is something altogether different." In the talks which he has been holding with the two revolutionaries (every Monday, since November 1972) and in which he plays by no means the principal part, Sartre continually refused to be "specific." He had no theory, he said. He refused to paint a picture of some alternative system. He has a compelling belief in "freedom for all", in the power of the individual, but it must never develop into coercion of other people. He does not explain, however, how this power without coercion can be exercised. His own thoughts he regards as provisional and transitional—"One must give vent forthwith to relevant thoughts, for if you produce ideas in twenty years' time, they will be of no practical value. . . ." One thing he is sure of: "To be free means acting in the service of something which does not yet exist (*agir en fonction de ce qui n'existe pas encore, c'est précisément être libre*)".

Today the revolutionary is a man conscious of his alienation, who looks at human life from a distance and anticipates that man will live in a non-alienated society. On one subject, on which he previously vacillated, Sartre is now uncompromising: elections are invariably bad things, invariably counter-revolutionary. To allow oneself to be represented by someone else instead of oneself taking action within one's own environment—that is the essence of *aliénation*. Even if it

is a vote cast for left-wing parties, then the associated self-deception would be all the greater and the ultimate disillusionment more bitter. What is essential is to "invent" some other form of political behaviour.

NEVERTHELESS, NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME Sartre reverted to the moral problem, having refused to write the work on Ethics forecast in his *L'Être et le*

Neant (1943). He has stated that development of a viable moral doctrine in a class-ridden society was an impossibility. Morality, so he now says, must show itself at the work-bench level, in production; it will be materialistic. But it is a primary fact of social life, and the Communists underestimate it. "When I was eighteen I was a prisoner of an idealistic irrationalism. By the time I was forty-five I was an amoral realist. . . ." Now,

Rudi Dutschke Reconsiders (a little)



THE RESULT OF the Russian Revolution of 1917 was a "half-Asiatic State-Socialism" and the "swamp of Czarist-bourgeois behaviour-patterns" has remained. It all "stinks to high heaven."

The Party of a Leninist type is, even when it is socialist in tendency, essentially a mirror-image of despotic Czarism. And this party, from its base in Russia, has compelled all the European Communists to accept a "half-Asiatic" model. Lenin abandoned "the revolutionary principle of the self-determination of nations and nationalities." He forced peoples on to a "cowering path" to Communism, and it is an error that reaches into the present.

These are some of the theses which Rudi Dutschke puts forth in his now-completed doctoral dissertation, a learned "attempt to stand Lenin back on his feet." It has just been published by the revolutionary Verlag of Klaus Wagenbach in West Berlin, under the title: "Versuch, Lenin auf die Füße zu stellen."

Dutschke's difficulties with the Russian Revolution are the old problem which has been plaguing Marxists for almost a century, namely whether it was possible or permissible to work for a socialist revolution in backward Russia. Russia, in Marxist eyes, was simply not "ripe." Russia had not yet gone through what was absolutely necessary in the timetable of Marxist history: a "bourgeois" revolution. Neither in 1900, when Lenin began to build his Bolshevik cadres, nor in 1917 when he seized power in St Petersburg, was the country sufficiently industrialised; and hence the proletariat was very small. The class struggle was not yet fully developed, and it took on different forms from that in the West.

WHAT, I SUPPOSE, THE DISSERTATION SHOWS in the very first place—quite apart from what a reader makes of the argumentation—is that Rudi Dutschke has now fully recovered from the wounds suffered in the Berlin assassination attempt of 1968. (After the British refusal to renew his "political asylum", he settled in Denmark.) He is clearly in full control of his mental powers, and this certainly is the welcome

news which the book brings. No need for readers to be falsely indulgent, or for a critic to be lenient. What is impressive about Dutschke's dissertation is the flow of ideas, the diligence with which he has gathered his materials, and a certain intellectual confidence which holds them together. But that is about all. The book is off-putting in its burden of endless quotations and its twisted language—and it raises the suspicion that Dutschke has come nowhere near his central purpose: namely, to turn things right side up and finally land the Revolution "on its feet", i.e. with the masses. Dutschke's language is very far from being the language of the "feet", the popular base, the million-footed masses, any more than Lenin's Revolution was (as Dutschke concedes) a movement of the people. Many voted with their feet (as the saying goes), but not all the feet voted Bolshevik.

Lenin's mistake, according to Dutschke, was that "he superimposed an intellectual structure with which Marx had tried to analyse Western Europe's bourgeois society on to a non-bourgeois Russian society" (and, accordingly, neglected the revolutionary potential of the Russian peasantry). Out of this very unhistorical Russian translation there inevitably resulted a "pedagogical-élite" Party which could only make a "revolution from above", could only transform the dictatorship of the proletariat into a "corrective-dictatorship" and into a form of domination which ended up by restoring Russian conditions of serfdom.

Dutschke thinks it important to make a distinction between the idea of a Russian and a West European revolution. Not only are the social conditions different but also "das reale bewusste Sein." To this factor of real self-consciousness Dutschke even goes on to add the special factors of "climatic" and "geographical" environment, elements which are usually associated with more conservative thinkers. In fact in one place Dutschke goes so far as to speak of the differences between half-Asiatic Russian and West European "systems of production and ways of life." So it is, surprisingly enough, the element of "Lebenstypen" which is part of the great divide between East and West. This plays a role in Dutschke's indignation about Marxian socialists in Germany today, who have "a left leg in Peking" and a "right leg in Moscow", and simply don't have both feet on the ground.

LENIN'S FAULT was to conceive the revolution "in his head" instead of having a true revolution move

however, morality appears to be the very basis of realism in his eyes.

To the two young men of the Far Left to whom he was talking Sartre drew attention to the fact that after victory the Revolutionary could indeed turn into an oppressor. But they only asked how resistance to such a new force could be possibly guaranteed now. Compared to them Sartre is a libertarian spirit as in the old innocent days of

anarchism or early syndicalism.

forward by marching on its own two legs: a movement of the masses, and one which pays attention to historical, regional, and national peculiarities. But, then, a new theoretical problem emerges: If not from "above", how is a revolution to be made "from below"? Who will be persuaded that those "masses"—so peculiarly formed by all the elements of history and climate and geography, etc.—will prove themselves to be the force which will drive the Revolution (for Dutschke, "the process of the humanisation of mankind") forward to full political power.

Dutschke thinks that Mao Tse-tung solved this "puzzle" for China by means of the Peasant Revolution, and Lenin could have solved it for Russia if he had based himself on the "pre-capitalist village communes." He remains convinced that in Germany the "Räterepublik" of the short-lived Munich Uprising in 1919 would have been the sound way ahead.

Lenin, in Dutschke's view, just didn't know the very essence of the true cause—it turns out to be the dialectic between the "Kingdom of Freedom and the Kingdom of Necessity." Whatever this may mean, is there any evidence that Dutschke has the key to this dialectic? Has he succeeded, where Lenin failed, to develop a theory for the historic realisation of the "Reich der Freiheit"—a theory which links the emancipation of the World Revolution to the spontaneity of Masses still locked in all their peculiarities?

SEARCH AS ONE MAY, no sign of it is in the book. It is a dissertation full of themes and theses, claims and propositions, none of which appears to bring Marxist theory one small step forward. In the end he, too, doesn't know how to make a "true revolution", or even to teach it, or even to philosophise about it. The old gaping hole between theory and practice is still there.

Could it be that these intellectual difficulties can only be resolved in history by a great and violent leap forward led by a "Great Man", and that the inevitable inescapable result is yet another form of terrorist domination? Dutschke appears to be more worried that his old comrades in Western Germany (and in West-Berlin) are only "playing around" with theory, and reactionary Leninist theory at that. What else is there for them to do? Where is the Revolution?

Georg Wolff

WHAT ARE THE PERSONAL PLANS of the ageing revolutionary? He proposes to go on with the fourth volume of his *Flaubert*¹ as long as his strength allows. At this his two young comrades said: "You ought to write a popular novel instead." Sartre objected: "I have already written three volumes and the fourth needs to be done. A popular novel? I should first have to find out what that is. Can such a thing be of any use at this time? When have popular novels ever aroused revolutionary fervour in their readers?" Then it was his age that showed: "You are asking a lot of me, and I work that much less. I shall think myself lucky if I finish my *Flaubert* . . ." The writing of a novel means being in sympathy with its hero's future, he went on; it means expressing one's own feelings about the shape of things to come through his experiences. "But for me the future is a sealed book—and then you expect me to start a new literary career. . . ."

SARTRE NOW MAINTAINS that he never pretended to have had all the valid answers; he frankly questions his own views. But is his refusal to clarify in any way the relationship between revolution and the brave new world authentic candour? His very refusal has almost become an obsession. Sartre seems to be expecting some new force "which is in no way a political force such as we know it." Does not this at least presuppose the elimination of that *rareté* which was one of Sartre's basic notions in his *Critique de la raison dialectique*?²

Admittedly, Part Two of this *Critique* will not now be written, any more than the treatise on Ethics which he once promised. So it is perhaps all the more understandable that Sartre does not want to leave his *Flaubert* as a limbless torso. Sartre now appears to be convinced that his political ideas will not remain valid for very long, but that his book on Gustave Flaubert will be read for a long time to come. Who would care to contradict him?

François Bondy

¹ See my account, "Sartre's Flaubert", in *Encounter* (December 1971).

² See Raymond Aron's critique of this work, "Sartre's Marxism", *Encounter* (June 1965); and Maurice Cranston, "Sartre & Violence", *Encounter* (July 1967).

Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State

An Evaluation By HANS J. MORGENTHAU



WHEN I TAUGHT at Harvard in 1950, I was advised to make the acquaintance of a graduate student of whom great things were to be expected. That student was Henry Kissinger. Even those who were then and have ever since been impressed with his intellect—in my case to the point of offering him a position at the University of Chicago—must have been surprised by his extraordinary ability, demonstrated since 1969, to translate theoretical insights into the practice of diplomacy by adapting them to the political necessities of the hour. Seeing now this ability in full bloom, I remember certain incidents from times long past that foreshadow the flowering of that gift.

Kissinger published in 1957 a book on *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* that put him in the forefront of the new breed of political-military thinkers. The burden of the book's argument was the possibility and the need to use tactical nuclear weapons as instruments of foreign policy. That thesis was received with enthusiasm by the official and think-tank orthodoxies which to this day have not tired of seeking a way of "conventionalising" nuclear war, that is, of fighting a war which would fall short of being a suicidal and genocidal absurdity. When it was pointed out in personal discussions and printed comment—convincingly in my (and obviously also Kissinger's) view—that so-called "tactical" nuclear war was likely to escalate into *all-out* nuclear war and that the distinction between strategy and tactic was *untenable* in practice because of the enormous destructiveness of even so-called tactical nuclear weapons—the Hiroshima bomb, for instance, being classified as "tactical"!—Kissinger gave up the thesis that made him famous and joined the critics.

In order to heal the rift between the United States and the European allies, which had become obvious in the late 1950s, President

Kennedy's administration hit upon an outlandish and stillborn scheme, the so-called Multilateral Seaborne Nuclear Force (MLF). It was supposed to give our European allies the illusion, but not the substance, of participation in nuclear policy. At the Pugwash meeting of 1964 at Karlovy Vary, one of the annual international conferences of scientists, Kissinger and I spoke against the scheme. However, while I voted against it, Kissinger abstained. His rationale was that, in view of the inevitability of *MLF*, the real issue was no longer whether to support or oppose it, but how to live with it. His substantive political judgment was wrong, for the *MLF* never saw the light of day; but his tactical political judgment was evidently right, for his abstention enabled him to retain his intellectual conviction without breaking with the Administration on the issue.

KISSINGER'S ATTITUDE towards the Viet Nam war provides another striking example of the same ability to adjust intellectual conviction to political exigencies. Kissinger defended the war in public; but he is too astute a political and military analyst not to have been aware of the unsoundness of Administration policy. Thus that policy which he called in private an unmitigated disaster, he defended in public in order not to lose his contacts with the Administration. It is this ability to move, as it were, on two disparate levels of discourse, that distinguished Kissinger from both the supporters and the opponents of the war. This disjunction between private convictions and public stance enabled Kissinger if not to sympathise with, at least to act decently towards the open opponents of the war. In contrast to some of his academic colleagues, some of whom are now his most vociferous critics, Kissinger never stooped to personal attacks and tried to avoid public polemics altogether. At the very least, he was smart enough to anticipate the collapse of a policy whose unsoundness he did not doubt. By not championing it too ostentatiously when it was in its heyday, he avoided the necessity to dissociate himself too visibly from it when he was called upon to liquidate the openly interventionist aspects of it, thereby earning him a Nobel Peace Prize.

HOWEVER, KISSINGER'S priceless asset, startling even to those who thought they

knew him well, is so rare and so extraordinarily perfected in him that the language has no term that would do it complete justice. Hence, it has to be described rather than defined.

Homer characterises his heroes with stereotyped adjectives. Thus Achilles is "striding mightily," Athena is "endowed with owl-like eyes," Odysseus is *polytropos*, that is, "many-sided" or "of many appearances." Kissinger is indeed *polytropos*. From that quality stems the fascination with which friends and foes, colleagues and strangers behold him. That quality encloses the secret of his success. Kissinger is like a good actor who does not *play* the role of Hamlet today, of Caesar tomorrow, but who *is* Hamlet today and Caesar tomorrow. The power the actor exerts over his audience, the force with which he imposes himself upon their minds and carries their emotions is due to the persuasiveness of the transformation through which his own personality is absorbed by the personality he presents on the stage. The audience experiences the presence not of actor X "making believe" that he is Hamlet today and Caesar tomorrow, but of Hamlet and Caesar themselves, reincarnated by the actor's wizardry.

So it is with this Secretary of State. Sadat of Egypt calls him "not only my friend but my brother," and while he is in Egypt that is what he is because that is what he chooses to be. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia attests to his "sincerity," and while he is in the presence of the King, that is indeed the impression he conveys. The Israeli Government (if not the people at large) looks to him as the only statesman who can bring peace without jeopardising the existence of Israel, and that is indeed the task he sets himself when he is in Israel. The harvest the Secretary of State garners from these transformations is the accumulation of a stunning quantity of good will and confidence in all the capitals concerned. He is thus enabled to perform the function of the "honest broker" (which Bismarck claimed for himself at the Congress of Berlin in 1878) who, wanting nothing for himself, has persuaded *all* concerned that he seeks *only* the satisfaction and reconciliation of *their* respective interests.

Kissinger, instead of being rejected by all because, disingenuously, he tells everybody what he wants to hear, is hailed by all as the "miracle worker" who satisfies the interests of all within limits tolerable for all concerned and, thereby, holds out at least the promise of an end to strife. This astonishing success results not only from a gift of transformation as such but also and above all from the impression of sincerity with which each transformation is permeated. The willingness *per se* to engage in such divergent, and often incompatible, transformations points to decep-

tion and dissimulation; and the panorama of all the transformations achieved conveys to the outside observer a breathtaking spectacle of changeability. But once the transformation has taken place, pretence and reality have become one. The mask has melted into the face, and the last thing the parties involved would think of blaming the Secretary of State for is lack of sincerity. That each transformation is carried by irresistible conviction, honest good will, and genuine concern is the ultimate triumph of Henry Kissinger's gift of transformation. It is also a triumph for his philosophy of foreign policy.

KISSINGER'S STEWARDSHIP of American foreign policy illustrates a statement of Winston Churchill about the relationship between general principles and the day-to-day business of foreign policy:

"Those who are possessed of a definite body of doctrine and of deeply rooted convictions upon it will be in a much better position to deal with the shifts and surprises of daily affairs than those who are merely taking short views, and indulging their natural impulses as they are evoked by what they read from day to day. . . ."

What saves Kissinger's transformations from being nothing more than virtuoso histrionic performances of an ambulatory actor (and this is indeed the ultimate source of the sincerity they convey) is the existence of "a definite body of doctrine and of deeply rooted convictions upon it." What Kissinger does is informed by that body of doctrine, and the energy with which he does it is nourished by the depth of his convictions. Thus, Kissinger resolved to liquidate active American involvement in the Viet Nam war while maintaining the Thieu régime in power; and all tactical turns and twists, promises and threats, pressures and concessions were intended to serve that dual purpose. As in Viet Nam so in the world at large: Kissinger's diplomatic tactics are at the service of that body of doctrine from which they receive their intellectual coherence and functional unity.

What does that body of doctrine contain?

ITS CONTENT can be formulated in four interconnected propositions.

1. Foreign policy must minimise the risk of nuclear war.
2. To that end, balances of power must be maintained and created which will deter the resort to war, conventional and nuclear.
3. Foreign policy must eliminate the incentive to resort to war by respecting the vital interests of other nations and exploiting with moderation advantages at the expense of other nations.
4. In a positive way, the interests of hostile

nations, especially in the fields of arms control and economic cooperation, must be so intertwined that the preservation of a peaceful *status quo* appears to all concerned more advantageous than the benefits to be expected from the unilateral pursuit of antagonistic interests. The institutionalisation of common interests must gradually take the sting out of surviving hostile confrontations.

All rational men of good will cannot fail to agree to the first three propositions. However, some of them will doubt the appropriateness of the fourth to achieve the universally desired end. Can atavistic passions and preconceptions be overcome by nothing more than a rational appeal to enlightened, even if institutionalised, self-interest? Or does mankind need a Nietzschean "revaluation of all values," which requires a wise, strong and audacious political leadership nowhere to be found?

GIVEN THESE THEORETICAL DOUBTS, it is not surprising that the policies seeking to put these propositions into practice have thus far not succeeded. The control of the nuclear arms race—the overriding issue upon whose solution the survival of civilisation on this planet depends—is farther from solution than ever. SALT II has been a complete failure, hardly disguised by the agreement to continue seeking an agreement; and both SALT I and II did hardly anything more than translate into legal obligations what the contracting parties intended to do anyhow. In good measure, as a result of this failure, the dreaded proliferation of nuclear weapons has begun in earnest, aided and abetted by the American promise to supply nuclear reactors to Middle Eastern nations. The Secretary of State showed himself fully aware of the disastrous consequences of such failure when he is quoted as having exclaimed:

"What in the name of God is 'strategic superiority' at those levels [of 10,000 warheads on each side]? We will be living in a world that will be extraordinarily complex, in which opportunities for nuclear warfare will exist that were unimaginable 15 years ago at the beginning of the nuclear age—and that is our driving concern."

The failure of the attempts at nuclear arms control is but the most spectacular specific instance of the failure of American policy towards the Soviet Union. A new relationship has indeed been established between the United States and the Soviet Union: due to the concrete interests of the Soviet Union in pacifying its western frontier while engaged in a serious conflict with China, in securing massive technological aid from the West, and in solidifying its predominance on the

Eurasian land mass. But that new relationship is a far cry from that "irreversible structure of peace" to which President Nixon triumphantly referred.

YET WHILE Kissinger's policies have thus far failed to achieve their stated aims, they have brought about a drastic transformation of world politics. They have replaced the rigid confrontations of the Cold War with the opportunities and risks of movement. Yet, as I have pointed out in a previous article in this journal,¹ they have benefited primarily China, Japan, and Western Germany. For the United States, they have provided new problems and risks together with new opportunities.

Whether the Secretary of State will be successful in imposing a new order upon these contradictory tendencies which have suddenly broken through the walls and curtains of the Cold War, will depend on his ability—and his luck. His ability has been widely admired at home and abroad while he has been criticised, at least until the Cyprus disaster, more often at home than abroad. Much of the domestic criticism has been unabashedly self-serving, advanced by perennial candidates for one or the other of the eminent positions Kissinger occupies. Others have been more comfortable with the clear-cut rigidities of the Cold War than they are with the improvisations and surprises of a foreign policy of movement. Others still deplore that the Department of State has not yet been rescued from the limbo in which it has dwelt since John Foster Dulles' days. Critics abroad have found the Secretary of State at times less than forthcoming in giving information and inviting advice. They have found his manner sometimes too imperial for their taste. Some of them have been shaken in their trust in his assurances when a comparison of notes revealed striking discrepancies.

While some of these failings may have been avoidable and others are the well-nigh inevitable result of the enormous power the Secretary of State of the United States wields (especially in the absence of strong Presidential leadership), Kissinger's stewardship of American foreign policy invites two fundamental critical questions. One concerns the overall aim of American foreign policy as conceived by the Secretary of State. The other involves his *modus operandi* and what it reveals of his conception of the role the Secretary of State ought to play in the conduct of American foreign policy.

SINCE THE END of the Second World War, American foreign policy has sought to maintain a modicum of peaceful order in the world and

¹ "The New Diplomacy of Movement", ENCOUNTER, August 1974.

transform that order into a stable system respected by all. That aim has been up against the objective conditions of much of the political world which is in a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary state. Thus, a commitment to stability in a largely unstable world has given American foreign policy an anti-revolutionary, pro-*status quo* direction. Until Kissinger took over the conduct of American foreign policy in 1969, this meant, as a matter of principle, an anti-Communist direction as well. It is one of the great merits of Kissinger's foreign policy to have taken the decisive step toward the ideological decontamination of American policy towards Communist nations. As long as foreign policy was conceived as the ideological confrontation between two incompatible philosophies and ways of life, one of which will ultimately have to yield, a policy of movement with its concomitants of *détente*, negotiated settlements, and cooperation, remained philosophically inconceivable and practically unfeasible. Thus ideological decontamination was a precondition for Kissinger's new foreign policy. It was a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the success of Kissinger's foreign policy.

That policy must not only overcome the handicap of a largely pre-revolutionary or revolutionary world which seeks stability as a result (not as a preventative) of revolution. But it must also face the inherent contradiction between the aim of stability and the method of movement. A policy of movement is inherently less stable than the rigid ideological confrontation characteristic of the Cold War. Its stability is vouchsafed not by its inner dynamic, which rather tends towards an unstable equilibrium, but by the moral context within which it operates and through which it is contained. This is the true political meaning of the controversy over the Jackson Amendment to the U.S.-Soviet trade bill, requiring of the U.S.S.R. the observance of certain minimum standards of moral behaviour without which a policy of movement appears to be extremely hazardous and a policy of *détente*, resulting therefrom, extraordinarily risky.

THESE INCOMPATIBILITIES have been the nemesis of American foreign policy before; the Bay of Pigs and Viet Nam are cases in point. The same incompatibilities threaten Kissinger's grand design with failure.

American policy toward Greece, culminating in the Cyprus débâcle, provides a case study of the brittleness of a policy that prefers even the semblance of stability to the mere possibility of change. Thus the United States supported in Greece an incompetent and depraved—incompetent in good measure because they were

depraved—coterie of Colonels against parliamentary democracy because the former would bring stability to American-Greek relations; and for the same reason it supported on Cyprus the Colonels against the Left-leaning and slippery, however constitutional, President Makarios. Yet the price to be paid in Greece and Cyprus for the "stability" seemingly provided by the colonels was extreme actual instability, and the prospect of a new stability adverse to American interests to boot. On Cyprus the attempt to change a precarious *modus vivendi* between Greeks and Turks in favour of the Greeks issued in the total collapse of that *status quo* and a change in favour of the Turks, carrying the threat of continuing violence. In Greece, the humiliating failure of the Cyprus adventure and the collapse of the Colonels' régime due to it have brought to the fore a government whose very existence is founded upon opposition to the United States and its interests, especially in the form of NATO. It is hardly open to argument that the collapse of American policy in the Eastern Mediterranean is the result of a general psychological and philosophical predisposition which prefers the seeming security provided by authoritarian governments to the superficial vagaries, hiding its underlying consistency, of democratic rule.

KISSINGER has thus far met the problems inherited or created by his own policy with uncommon imagination, skill and persistence. I have no doubt that Kissinger is the best-endowed Secretary of State the United States has had since Dean Acheson (which, to some, may appear to be but limited praise), and one of the six or so best Secretaries of State the United States has had altogether. However, not unaware of his extraordinary combination of gifts, he has insisted on putting them into play personally and continuously at a particular point of conflict, such as the Middle East, thereby distorting the distribution of functions between the Secretary of State and the Department of State. The Secretary of State of the United States spent more than a month in the Middle East, concentrating his attention and efforts upon nothing more than the separation of the armed forces of Israel and Syria. It may well be true that these personal services were indispensable; for it can be argued that nobody else could have achieved what he did.

That argument invites two questions.

How stable are agreements likely to be which require such prolonged and almost superhuman efforts on the part of one man, especially when one considers that the issues settled are simple as compared with the bulk of the issues remaining unsettled and for which no rational settlement is in sight? Granted that the prevention of another

full-fledged war is of prime importance not only for the Middle East but for the world, the risk of the direct involvement of the superpowers being now greater than ever before, can a power of the rank of the United States afford to leave all other issues for all practical purposes unattended, and the consideration of initiatives throughout the world suspended, while the Secretary of State performs the functions of an ambassador or assistant secretary? Is, for instance, the separation of troops in the Middle East, even if it turns out to be a first step towards replacing Soviet with American influence and continuous warfare with peace, more important than the success of SALT II or the restoration of the Atlantic alliance or the reorientation of Japan's foreign policy?

I am not mindless of the dilemma a Secretary of State of Kissinger's stature faces in making a choice. I am only pointing to the risks Kissinger's choice entails.

It may well be that Kissinger's policy will succeed in displacing Soviet influence and bringing peace to the Middle East. The Secretary of State will then be hailed as one of the great statesmen of the 20th century. It may also be that the very same policies will utterly fail as elaborate agreements laboriously achieved failed to bring peace to South Viet Nam. People will then marvel at the talent wasted and the efforts misspent on a failing enterprise. That is to say, to be successful it is not enough for a secretary of state to be endowed with the personal qualities which go into the making of a great statesman. He also needs luck, or what Machiavelli called *fortuna*.

This does not mean that blind accident decides

the outcome. The luck of the statesman is the luck of the speculator rather than of the gambler. It means to be attuned in a mysterious way to the objective situation, to submit to the limits it imposes even upon the most gifted of actors, and to take hold of an opportunity at the fleeting moment when it offers itself. That is roughly what Bismarck meant when (in a letter to his wife) he wrote that the best the statesman can do is to listen to the footsteps of God striding through history and try to grasp the hem of his vestment when he walks by. That is surely what Lincoln meant when he wrote at the end of the Civil War: "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me."

THAT ABILITY TO BE "lucky" requires a quality of character rather than of mind or of manipulative finesse. For the statesman, in order to be endowed with that ability, must be capable of separating his ego from his task, subordinating both to the objective laws that govern the political universe. The statesman, in order to be truly great regardless of success or failure, must behold himself not as the infallible arbiter of the destiny of men, but as the handmaiden of something which he may use but cannot control. *Fortuna* smiles only on those who concede her the last word.

Henry Kissinger has already made his mark as one of the ablest Secretaries of State who have served the United States. Whether he will go down in history as one of the greatest statesmen of the twentieth century will depend upon his mastery of that ultimate paradox of statesmanship: to control fate by submitting to it.

"Cola di Rienzi" by Friedrich Engels

The Discovery of a Previously Unknown Manuscript



became co-author of the *Communist Manifesto*: Friedrich Engels.

FOR NEARLY four years, the 31-year-old historian Michael Knieriem had been tirelessly digging up the social history of the city of Wuppertal. The most prominent subject of his research was none other than the son of a local industrialist who

Knieriem is curator of the "Friedrich Engels Museum" (in the borough of Barmen in Wuppertal where Engels was born in 1820), which each month exhibits the socialist Founding Father's papers and memorabilia to about 800 visitors, half of whom are from the Communist East. His research called for him to go through material left behind by a local socialist poet named Adolf Schult, a contemporary of Engels. There, in a dusty old soap-powder carton, among bundles of letters, poems and other manuscripts, he came upon three pale-beige double-pages, DIN A-4 in size, with some verse written on them in brown ink.

THIS REPORT is from a correspondent of "Der Spiegel" (Hamburg).

"Fort, verwegne Pöbelschaar! (Away, insolent rabble!)" Knieriem deciphered from the closely, written old Gothic-style (Sütterlin) handwriting "*Kennt Ihr dieses Fusses Tritt, der auf Euren Häuptern schritt?* (Know you this foot's tread that bore down on each man's head?)" But he also read "*O süßes Weib! Gedenkst Du nimmer der Liebe, die uns sonst vereint, der Schwüre all bei Sternenschimmer, der Thränen, die Du mir geweint?* (Sweet maid! Spare you no thought for the love that was ours, tears shed for me and oaths sworn in starry hours?)"

"I knew at once," Knieriem recalls, "that this had to be something, in every sense of the word, dramatic." And although the three pages carried neither a title nor the author's name, their discoverer was in little doubt from the beginning that the writer concerned was young Friedrich Engels. Utterly surprised by this unexpected find, Knieriem "nervously" untied all the remaining bundles of Schult's papers that same day; and among Schult's correspondence with a noblewoman he did indeed find what he had been hoping for: another four double pages, one of which revealed the title of the work, "*Cola di Rienzi*."

Until then, the fact that Engels had taken the Roman innkeeper's son and tribune of the people, Cola di Rienzi (1313–1354), hero of the Richard Wagner opera of the same name, for the title-role of a drama had been unknown to students of Marxism throughout the world. Firm evidence of such a work by him had never been found. In order to be quite certain, however, Knieriem sent photocopies of one double page of his discovery to the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in East Berlin and to the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam for an authoritative identification of the hand writing. As Knieriem reports, "Both sent confirmation by return post." He then contacted his colleague Hans Pelgar, curator of the Karl Marx Museum in Trier; and together they systematically deciphered the manuscript.

THERE WAS, apparently, "real detective work" to be done. Engels' incomplete figures "*ein und (one and)*" were, for example, interpreted by the researchers as a reference to the twenty-one centuries of Roman History between the traditional date of the city's foundation (753 B.C.) and the beginning of Rienzi's tribunate in 1347. They found the abbreviation "*tr.*" stood for "*treu*", and wavy lines in the margins were stage directions for lines to be spoken simultaneously.

In this scholarly investigation, Knieriem also found indications of the date when the piece was written. Among the pages decorated by the author with all sorts of little figures and emblems, he saw a drawing of two men fencing; and,

written in Hebrew letters at right angles to the text, the first words of the Bible "*Am Anfang schuf Gott* (In the beginning God created.))" which he remembered from Engel's letters from the years 1840/41. Therefore, Knieriem concluded, "*Rienzi*" must have been produced when the author was just about twenty years of age. The Rienzi theme had been popularised in the 1830s through the novel of Bulwer-Lytton (published in Leipzig in 1835). Richard Wagner's opera had its Dresden premiere in 1842.

THIS HITHERTO UNKNOWN WORK, printed on handmade paper and with the addition of explanatory comments, documents and facsimiles of the handwriting, has now been published in book form. The "dramatic sketch" itself takes up just 45 pages of large print, as the young writer abruptly stopped midway in the third act.

The fragment combines, in brisk verse and rather sloppy imagery—"Mein Busen drängt sich auf und nieder (My breast heaves up and down)"—political history with passionate love-scenes. The hero of the title—"Purpur gelegt um den Schultern (About whose shoulders the purple was laid)" by the Roman people—shares intense and pompous scenes with his wife, Nina. An opponent who Rienzi had purged, a mysterious knight, Montreal, leaves behind him a mistress by the name of Camilla, who then inflames the mob "*unsrer Freiheit Raub zu rächen*" (to avenge the robbery of our freedom)—young Marx in Cologne would have appreciated it—"unsrer Freiheit Raub zu rächen (the robbery of our freedom)." The fragment concludes menacingly: "*Unserem Zorn entgehst Du nicht* (You will not escape our anger)."

THIS DRAMA of the Roman peoples' tribune was, and this much we know for certain, not Engels' literary début. Even while still at school he had tried his hand at poetry, and under the pseudonym "Friedrich Oswald"—adopted to protect his sensitively conservative family—he actually made something of a name for himself. Under Oswald's by-line during 1839–43, Engels wrote newspaper articles, stories, pamphlets, and tried to get his poems published by Freiligrath. First in Wuppertal, and later in Berlin (where young Engels did his military service), he was a frequent guest and participant in the literary societies fashionable at the time. One of these *Literaturkränzchen* hoped for nothing less than "the Reform of German Literature." Following Lessing's "Hamburger Dramaturgy" they acted out new German dramas (or, often, Shakespeare) and hoped for a golden age, after some "great [cultural] 'Revolution'." The young writers who gathered together would also read out their own works to

one another, go on to make criticisms of them, and pass both around the small circle. Knieriem speculates that Engels' dramatic sketch could have been circulated in such a group and so found its way among the papers of the Eberfeld office-clerk (and later poet), Adolf Schult.

To its discoverer, Knieriem, this mixture of political posturings and emotional outpouring is more than a *posse*, or farce. Though "I often had to laugh out loud while transcribing it" (and he is convinced that Engels "just scribbled it down"), in his opinion the fragment nevertheless does bring out a certain number of revealing "side-lights" on the young Engels.

The tyro dramatist, so Knieriem judges from the incomplete composition, "at least wanted to show that the People must play a role and that they could raise the demand for popular sovereignty." The "wrath of the raging mob (*di rasenden Pöbels Wuth*)", as the dialogue calls it, is given expression in some striking passages such as this popularistic mockery of the patrician class:

Wollen kindlich Euch verpflegen,
Wollen nimmer revoltieren,
Keine freien Reden führen,
Weib und Kind Euch überlassen
Hab und Gut—Ihr mögt's verprassen,
Mägt uns placken, quölen, schinden,
Drücken, martern, fesseln, binden,
Peinign für unsre Sünden,
Bleibt nur bei uns, bitten wir!

(We want to care for you like children
You know we never will rebel
Never speak our minds out freely
Give you wife and child as well
For all that's ours is yours to spend!

¹ Friedrich Engels, *Cola di Rienzi* (Peter Hammer Verlag, Wuppertal; 98 pages and 26 sheets of facsimile), edited by Michael Knieriem, 20 DM.

We will allow you to oppress us
Torment, torture, chain and stress us
And punish us for all our sins
But please stay with us till the end!)

Knieriem even finds revolutionary thoughts behind the figure of Camilla, whom Engels has drawn on the manuscript as a virago with sword in hand and flowing hair. She is evidently meant to be—and young Engels was, apparently sensitive to the "humiliating history" of female roles—the prototype of the emancipated woman, involving herself actively in events and putting forward the claims of the individual against political coercion. Of course that is not an infrequent theme on the stages of much of 19th-century European Theatre, and it could well be that Engels' *Rienzi* was intended to be grand opera.

To Pelgar, the Marx scholar from Trier, the play demonstrated primarily "that this Engels was a whimsical fellow." "One has to admit," he says, with a shade of disappointment, "the find has not exactly shaken the foundation of the Kremlin. . . ."

ALL THE SAME a little curiosity and the standard veneration did bring emissaries rushing in from the Communist countries the moment the discovery in Wuppertal was made public. "The news," says Knieriem, "seemed to hit Moscow and East Berlin like a little bomb." The couriers from the East tried in vain to secure first publishing rights from the lucky finders of Engels' early work. "But we just couldn't let it go," says Knieriem. Meanwhile, it is certain that the incomplete melodrama of *Cola di Rienzi*¹ will in any case appear in the projected 100-volume Eastern edition of the collected works of Marx and Engels.

Little Men, What Now?

London Commentary—By DONALD WATT



democratic historian to pronounce on the parallels

IT OCCURRED TO THE producers of Radio 4's *The World at One* in July this year to devote part of a programme to Inflation. Since the 1923 inflation in Weimar Germany was common coin in political discussion, they felt the need for an academic

historian to pronounce on the parallels between Weimar and the rise of Nazism, and the possible dangers of a breakdown in Britain's political institutions under the strains of inflation today. In July academic pundits are fairly thin on the ground in London, so the lot fell to me. In the course of a fairly brief interview, I said that, to my mind, the parallels between our present position and Weimar Germany were somewhat less than convincing, and that if the establishment of any kind of quasi-Fascist authoritarian régime were to be feared in Britain it seemed to me that it would come through the continuous extension of allegedly benevolent bureaucratic power (of the Mummy-knows-best-dear type) combined with a doctrinaire majority in one or other of the political

parties. Indeed, I added, with a slightly bitter memory of the experiences of universities over the last decade, I wondered if it was not already happening.

A few days later, an old friend and former colleague telephoned me to tell me of Lord Longford's now famous letter to *The Times* calling for "new ideas", and of the conference he proposed to call as a result of the very large response (over a thousand letters) his initiative had drawn. He thought that there ought to be someone on the platform who could talk with authority on the historical examples of Inflation and perhaps intervene to prevent erroneous conclusions being drawn from misleading analogies. I agreed with some reluctance. The fundamentalist and Savaronesque aspects of some of Lord Longford's recent activities are not entirely to my personal taste. But my friend's involvement in this new initiative seemed adequate guarantee that it was of a rather different order to Lord Longford's anti-pornography campaign and the Festival of Light. It would at least be a new experience. The clincher came when to my remark that I was beginning to understand much more how helpless so many of my own analogues must have felt in Germany in the years 1930-33, swept up in a course of events seemingly totally impervious to any action within their own grasp, my friend replied that here at least was a group of private citizens who were attempting to "do something."

MY MISGIVINGS DEEPENED as the summer advanced and the shape of the conference became clearer. It was apparently to be divided into sections: economic, cultural, religious and moral. I was to speak, with C. P. Snow, in the cultural section. In the event this section disappeared entirely. I finally appeared to speak on "Is Foreign Experience Relevant?" just before lunch and immediately after the big guns of the religious and moral section. Lord Snow appeared in the middle of the afternoon, spoke with enormous good sense (his remarks went quite unreported, the press having been driven away, I suspect, by the shape the afternoon session seemed to be taking), and then left the hall.

The morning's session was fairly well reported by all the British media. The most influential voice came from Lord Aldington, Chairman of the Port of London Authority. But the main burden of the speeches from the floor began very early on to take a form I found progressively more alarming. They were nearly all simplistic, favouring what we academics call single-cause explanations. A high proportion were informed with hostility to Parliament, cabinet government and members of the Commons (described by one speaker as the 630 layabouts). A majority flaunted a sense of injured nationalism which was little

short of jingoistic. (An impassioned plea for entry into Europe produced only an embarrassed silence.) There was a continuous call for leadership and continuous allegations that "they", the anonymous politicians, were not "giving us the facts." This was intermingled with much that was delightfully, if parochially, eccentric.

The "religious and moral" session which followed was, however, much more to the taste of much of the audience. Bishop Trevor Huddleston saw the "Crisis" (whether the Inflation, or the state of consequent bewilderment which seemed to have driven so many of his audience to give up an entire Saturday to the conference, was not clear) as a form of divine vengeance. This was, if perhaps a trifle unhelpful, at least arguably germane. The other two speakers, a Miss Joanna Nash and Mr Trevor Gordon of the Melting Pot Foundation (a West Indian self-help organisation) seemed much less relevant to the main theme of the conference. Mr Gordon clearly suffered from feeling this himself. His plea for "understanding" the lot of the West Indian immigrant and their children in London today might in fact have led to a discussion of what society in Britain could (and should) do for those whom it was progressively alienating and proletarianising—at a time when inflation was intensifying the strains which the problems of immigration were imposing on everyone. But it was clearly not what the bulk of the audience had come to hear. Miss Nash's impassioned denunciation of the recent abortion legislation and the advocacy of euthanasia, on the other hand, was. If society was "morally sick", Miss Nash had put her finger acutely on that aspect of the malady on which they had already concentrated their attention.

This emerged even more strongly in the afternoon's session. It opened with Sir Richard Acland, a powerful voice from the past. (Indeed the general feeling that Lord Longford's speakers came either from his own politico-moral contacts or from the flotsam-and-jetsam of the Establishment reinforced my own agreement with the Groucho-Marxist theorem that anyone who relied on my name to bolster their platform was clearly in a bad way.) But the tone was really set by an aggressively American pastor who assured his audience that Jesus had not at all forgotten them. The majority of the speakers who followed him took very much similar lines. Their deity clearly was an active and punitive interventionist, a dispenser of retribution for sin. For most of them the legal prohibition of sin by law, and the consequent pressure to bring this about, was almost the only pertinent political attitude in the afternoon's discussions. The chairlady (there is by now such a word even in England) held them firmly to their allotted four minutes, easily sub-

duing a bearded propagandist for PEOPLE (it was described as "a new political movement" in its literature) who tried to appeal to the audience for an extension. But otherwise there was little that could be done to separate the concerned citizens from the would-be Jeremiahs and Micahs in the audience. Perhaps the crowning illustrations of this were provided by (1) a nurse who said that the spiritual suffering of the children of today unavoidably enmeshed in the exploitation of sex was infinitely worse than the suffering of the child labourers of 19th-century industrial Britain, and (2) Mr O. R. Johnson of the Festival of Light, recently returned from East Germany, who confessed himself convinced that his children would have been more advantaged had they been reared in the purity of East Germany than amidst the corruption of contemporary Britain. There were appeals for a New Patriotic Party (or at least a ginger group) to set about the work of National Regeneration.

THE ATMOSPHERE in some respects struck me with increasing familiarity. Where had I heard before these continuous attacks on parliamentary institutions, these denunciations of sexual degeneracy, this insistence that "economics is only of second- or third-date importance and the primary role falls to factors of politics, ethics, morality and blood..." It was—dare I make the footnote reference?—in *Mein Kampf*.¹

... our whole public life today is like a hothouse for sexual ideas and stimulations. Just look at the bill of fare served up in our movies, vaudevilles and theatres. In shop windows and on billboards the vilest means are used to attract the attention of the crowd. Public life must be freed from the stifling perfume of our modern eroticism—the sickening of the body is only the consequence of a sickening of the moral, social and racial instincts...

The only element lacking was, of course, the racist. Lord Longford's conference like his earlier crusades may be aggressively, if (in my view) pharisaically, "Christian." They are, however, totally enclosed in humanitarian benevolence. The bitterness of the streets was to be found that same day on the streets, in the (much smaller) march of the extreme Right's National Front and the counter-gatherings of behelmed protesters from the extreme Left mindlessly shouting repetitive slogans. It was, to me, striking that few if any of the audience at the Central Hall West-

¹ For the preceding quotation see my edition of *Hitler's Mein Kampf* (Macmillan, 1970), pp. 206-7. The interested reader should also examine the passages in Volume I, Chapter 3 on parliamentarism and Chapter 4, p. 140 on the need for individual self sacrifice. Attacks on the media figure on pp. 78-80, 219-24, and on the sexual degeneration of society on pp. 224-34.

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minster realised how easily simplistic solutions and searches for targets for moral reprobation can become means of ensnaring those who embrace them into supporting political movements which are essentially repressive in character. Indeed it has always puzzled me how the ordinarily decent bourgeois churchgoing German of the Weimar Republic, who voted in droves for the *Deutschnationalpartei* or the *Centrumpartei*, could have overcome their social and ethical repulsion for the types of personality which constituted the Nazi leadership in the years 1929–33. That there was something “inherent in the German character” which predisposed them towards any kind of authoritarian movement, even one from the gutter, never struck me as an entirely adequate explanation. I find the phenomenon of desperation easier to grasp now: though even a retrospective condonation of violence by any but a scattering of Lord Longford’s audience is unthinkable.

THE LONGFORD GATHERING is symptomatic of a much larger loss of confidence in the existing institutional machinery of government. The apparent powerlessness of the two alternative governing parties in the face of inflation and the seeming irrelevance of their cosy internecine struggles, scoring points off each other in Parliament, in the Press and on the Telly, gives rise to a feeling of alienation, increasingly felt by those classes which had previously instinctively identified themselves with the interests of government. The organisation of talk-feasts like the Longford conference is one of the characteristic reaction patterns of British society. What is perhaps less

characteristic is the lack of any specific focus or programme put forward by the sponsors. It is not surprising therefore that the vacuum tended to attract “single cause” exponents of all kinds, and the aggressive sin-abolitionists in particular.

It is here, of course, that the danger to existing institutions must lie. The Longford audience consisted of largely baffled and bewildered middling spirits. The angry men of Left and Right were out on the streets.² What must concern all our existing political leadership is that the mood of anger does not spread. The complexity of interacting processes which go to make up the national economy can only too easily lead those affected by them, in their powerlessness to reject any effort to grasp that complexity in favour of a simplistic belief in the deceitfulness of those who attempt to expound the complexity, and a consequent willingness to embrace both single-cause explanations and anyone who offers to provide the Necessary Leadership to Do Something About It.

The effort to *understand* is surely what distinguishes the citizen of a democracy from that of a plebiscitary autocracy, who only has to say “yes” or “no” to whatever issues the organisers of the plebiscite put before him. There has always been an element in every society which prefers to behave as though blind confidence in the leadership is all that is required, just as there is inevitably a sizeable element of single-cause believers who attach themselves to a particular political party or movement. It is when one sees signs of a growth in these separate elements, and of their coalescence, that alarm bells should begin to ring. Is a situation arising that would be exploitable by the politically ambitious and the power-hungry? Did I really detect signs of the birth of such a situation among the *macedoine* of sentiments expressed at the Longford meeting? I was left with the feeling that if ever the “lack of leadership” was overcome, something very ominous could be in the offing.

² The participants in all three events were, incidentally, outnumbered by the large happy gathering of young Jesus-Freaks dancing that same Saturday afternoon in Trafalgar Square to an Evangelist pop-group at the base of Nelson’s Column, an event totally ignored by press and television alike.

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ROUTLEDGE

BOOKS & WRITERS

Reading the Old Masters

Symbolism in Art—By EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH

JAMES HALL's book¹ is the third compilation of its kind to appear in recent years. The other two are J. E. Cirlot's *A Dictionary of Symbols* (Routledge), and Howard Daniel's *Encyclopaedia of Themes and Subjects in Painting* (Thames & Hudson). In addition to these one-volume works in English, there are, of course, standard sources of reference on a much larger scale, such as Louis Réau's *Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien*.

Hall's *Dictionary* follows the formula established by its two predecessors—there is an introduction by a distinguished pundit, in this case Lord Clark, and then a series of subject entries, arranged alphabetically. It seems to me to surpass its rivals in terms of practicality because it straddles the question of subject-matter and the rather different one of symbolism without giving undue weight to either (Cirlot, for example, is so passionately interested in symbols that he can hardly bring himself to discuss the actual subject of a painting at all); and also because the system of cross-referencing is better. The one place where it falls down is in the introductory essay, which is a page-and-a-half of pious art-historical platitudes. Buy the book, if you buy it at all, for Hall alone, but certainly not for Clark.

Granted the intrinsic usefulness of the work, the thing which begins to interest me is what it has to tell us about our attitudes towards the painting of the past; and through that, about our relationship to the western cultural tradition taken as a whole. I mean, of course, the relationship which is enjoyed by reasonably well-educated people, because it is undoubtedly the way in which we are educated that governs our access to the cultural heritage—such doors do not open entirely spontaneously. So there is no point in pretending that the book can be discussed in purely democratic terms.

On the whole, the kind of information I find myself extracting from its pages is discouraging. It is not merely that every page seems to reveal

to me a new aspect of my own ignorance. St Margaret, for example, must figure in tens, if not scores, of the canvases by Old Masters which I have looked at in the great galleries of the world. But I was content to recognise her by her dragon, without realising that, according to the legend, it was this same dragon which devoured her in her dungeon, but which was unable to digest such a virtuous morsel, and therefore burst asunder, leaving the virgin unharmed. But gaps of this kind in my knowledge make me wonder if I have been enjoying pictures under false pretences. The language they speak, or at least the language they spoke to their original audience, is one I understand very imperfectly.

At the same time, I realise that the pangs of conscience I feel as I leaf through the book are a new symptom, in terms of 20th-century art criticism. It is only in comparatively recent years that the perusal of iconography, under the aegis of scholars such as Edgar Wind and Erwin Panofsky, has begun to achieve an important place in the study of the visual arts. Even now, there is a tendency to treat it as a separate specialty, as something which contributes little to our understanding of the "quality" of the work.

Ever since Fry and Berenson, the tendency has been to try and look at paintings by Old Masters in terms which direct our attention to form, and the arrangement of forms, rather than to subject-matter. When we look at details, we look at them in a different spirit from that which the painters themselves intended—the shape of an eye, the crook of a finger, the curve of a smile: these indicate, not the fullness of the intended meaning, but the authorship of the work. We find in them the recognisable quirks through which the artist announces his presence whether he intended to do so or not.

What this means is that Cézanne, and after him the various sorts of abstract art, have re-educated our eyes to the point where we look at Old Master paintings in a very different manner from that of the audience to whom they were

¹ *Dictionary of Symbols and Subjects in Art*. By JAMES HALL. John Murray, £5.

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Christian Metz

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Michael Taylor**

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originally addressed. At the same time, we bring to such paintings—indeed, the whole tradition of connoisseurship is founded upon it—a feeling that knowledge of who painted a given canvas is of over-riding importance, certainly as compared to exact knowledge of what it conveys.

THUS ORIENTATED, we find it difficult to allow some pictures to function in the way that they have been designed to do. A striking example, common in northern art, is the *Vanitas* still life. We recognise, perhaps, that the skull which usually occupies a prominent place in compositions of this type is meant as a reminder of human mortality—but how far are we capable of assigning the correct meanings to the objects which commonly surround it? I am thinking, now, of a particularly splendid example, painted by a member of the Leyden School, which hangs in the house of a friend. Here the skull is accompanied by a plethora of other objects. In some cases, the meaning is obvious—a hour-glass and a watch, for instance, are both emblematic of passing time; flowers symbolise the fleetingness of life. Everywhere one looks in this painting, new meanings emerge—there are emblems of the arts and of the senses; a statuette of Cupid may imply the impotence of love, and a nearly empty wine-glass may speak of the Eucharist. The picture is a rebus; each object is also a word, the words can be linked together to create a sermon on the theme of human transience. But, even after one has collected all the necessary information, it requires a conscious effort to allow the picture to speak in this way. If it has a language, it is one as dead as Latin.

However, there is undoubtedly a way, in addition to the language of form, whereby Old Master paintings may speak to us, though it is not a method of communication which the original audience would have recognised. Our greater degree of sophistication about unconscious processes encourages us to find meanings of our own in many of the subjects which Mr Hall lists and discusses in his book. Representations of the myth of Perseus and Andromeda, for instance, suggest associations to Freudians and Jungians alike—Jung saw, in this myth, the liberation of the “anima” (symbolised by the captive maiden) from the “devouring” aspect of the mother (symbolised by the dragon which the hero kills). Freudians, looking at Titian’s famous version of the theme in the Wallace Collection, will note that it contains a rich collection of erotic fantasies, with its naked woman in bondage, its invulnerable hero (protected from any fears about his own potency or lack

of it), and the *vagina dentata* of the monster’s gaping mouth. In this instance, the psychological implications are already present in the legend; but nevertheless, by embodying that legend, the artist seems to make them more emphatically present.

The situation is somewhat different in the case of certain commonly represented scenes of martyrdom. Numerous St Sebastians, by artists ranging from Mantegna to Van Dyck, hint at homosexual and sado-masochistic preoccupations; the arrows which pierce the flesh of the captive saint are all too obviously penises directed against a beautiful, unwilling, and yet passive boy. When we look at pictures of this type today, bringing to them contemporary knowledge and contemporary preoccupations, what we seem to see is a palimpsest. The picture becomes a surface on which two meanings are written, one emerging from beneath the other. Or, better still, the comparison is with the changes which take place in oil-paint itself, during the course of centuries. With age the paint, with which the artist has altered a particular contour or feature in the course of the work, becomes transparent, and allows the original outline to show through. The disturbing thing is that the under-drawing, the psychological archetype, has, because of the changes wrought by time, become more important to us than the meaning which the artist consciously intended, and set out to convey.

This might suggest that we ought, when considering our cultural heritage, to pay more attention to what time itself does, as a kind of joint-creator with the artist himself. At the present moment, there is a reaction against the cult of patina. The way in which collectors used to cherish the physical alterations wrought by the passing of the years, the darkening and yellowing of varnish in particular, now seems to us highly suspect. The modern restorer will tell you that he can have no truck with taste; that the purpose of cleaning a picture must be to bring it, as nearly as possible, into the condition in which it left the artist’s hands, though with the important proviso that important gaps and wounds in the surface are to be camouflaged very lightly, if at all. But nothing can take the work of art back into the context in which it was created; it is floating inexorably down the time-stream, each day further from its origins, and therefore from its intended meaning.

The idea of time as a joint-creator is already at least tacitly accepted when it comes to the appreciation of archaeological objects. It is the mere fact that it is so old, and comes from a context almost unimaginably different from the one which we ourselves inhabit, which gives

resonance to the simple Cycladic marble bowl which adorns a collector's cabinet.

THE EASIEST WAY of getting to grips with the phenomenon, however, is to consider the cult of the sculptural fragment, and in particular of the male or female torso, which has played a minor but still noticeable part in the evolution of sculpture from the Renaissance onwards. True, the original impulse of the Renaissance patron was to have the work which came from the earth in fragmentary condition restored to the condition which it might have been in when it left the Roman workshop. But even then certain fragments seem to have been found admirable in themselves, notably the celebrated Torso Belvedere. And if we look at the drawings made by artists who were fascinated by the antique—Amico Aspertini and Jan de Bischoep are two very different examples which come to mind—we see that artists in particular found the incompleteness of these fragments a challenge to their ingenuity in conjecture how they might originally have looked, but still more a stimulus to the creative imagination. And from this it is only a brief step to the kind of situation where the artist deliberately makes a fragmentary work, as a challenge to the spectator. This is what we find happening in Rodin.

Where the work is still physically complete, it is perhaps more difficult to think of it as being time-transformed to any really radical extent. Yet this is what I believe has happened to many of the pictures by great masters which hang in our major galleries. There is no means whereby we can get to grips with them, except by incorporating them, as found objects, into our own myth, just as the caddis worm constructs his tube from the detritus which he finds on the stream-bed.

Yet there is an important qualification to be made. One of the things which Mr Hall points out in his preface is that the typology of western art is surprisingly restricted. Indeed, he remarks that this restriction of themes is the factor which has made his dictionary possible. The reasons why this should be so are related to the nature of western society itself—it was not only that the Church over-saw the choice of religious subject-matter which fell into well-defined categories; but that secular subject-matter was also related, usually by analogy, occasionally through reaction, with the tenets which the Christian religion propagated. The more one studies the *Dictionary of Symbols and Subjects in Art*, the more one begins to think of traditional western culture as a hall of mirrors, in which myths and symbols

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rhyme with one another, or are presented in linked chains of consequences, or appear strangely distorted but still recognisably related each to each. And what has happened, as the tradition has broken up, is that we find ourselves excluded from this amazing dream-palace, or at any rate unable to experience its effects in the same direct fashion as our ancestors.

Perhaps, on the other hand, the comparison to a hall of mirrors is not entirely apt, because one function of this typology seems to have been that it provided men not only with a means of self-recognition, but with a reassuring stability. What I mean is this. The standard "situations" which the pictures present—Tobias and the Angel, Christ in the House of Martha and Mary, the Meeting at the Golden Gate—offered, in many cases, a possible analogy with the real situations in which the spectator found himself. What the artist did, or at any rate the great artist, was to use the power of form and colour to give what was happening an intensity which went beyond the ordinary reality of the senses, however finely attuned.

We ourselves can still recognise this, though we tend to analyse the way in which the work of art energises its surroundings in a cool and cerebral way. What we no longer have is the common ground provided by an acceptance of

the ethic which energised all the type situations, religious and secular ones alike, and which helped at the same time to make the concept of cultural wholeness at least notionally possible.

ONE OF THE STRIKING things about the art which has been produced since 1945, for instance, is the fact that it abounds chiefly in images of isolation. Thus, the typical Abstract Expressionist painting is entirely introverted—each canvas is a record of a plunge into the depths of the unconscious, but that unconscious is emphatically not collective. It illuminates the innermost depths of the artist who, like Jackson Pollock, challenges the void within himself. Similarly, the commonest misconception about Pop Art is in the idea that it is in any sense popular. Rather, it represents the ironic and sophisticated reaction of the man who deliberately sets himself apart from mass culture, and who claims the power to sit in judgment on what the mass makes, likes and does.

Where there have been efforts made to integrate art with the community, one is continually struck, not only by their self-consciousness, but by a lack of confidence in art itself. The most worrying aspect of the so-called community arts movement which has recently been making progress in England is the assumption one encounters, not

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among its opponents, but among its most ardent supporters, that the quality of what is done will have to be lowered, if the art itself is to communicate. Arguments veer perilously close to the flat assertion that quality is the enemy of communication.

This rather begs the question of what artistic quality is. Are the standards of the traditionalists merely a way of holding the line against change, of preventing the development of art in harmony with the demands of a democratic society? One must admit that the notion of a yardstick has occasionally been used in this way. But to do so implies a shallow conception of those very standards which are being defended.

When we look at some, though not all, of the achievements of the past (and, more specifically, when we look at some of the works which Mr

Hall's *Dictionary* is there to help us interpret), we are forced to admit not only that they are masterpieces but that many have a popular purpose. The frescoes painted by Giotto at Assisi, the bronze doors of the Baptistery in Florence, the windows at Chartres and the sculptures at Bamberg are all of them cases in point. What we feel when we look at these is almost precisely the opposite of what we feel when we look at a Pollock—they speak to us as social beings. Alas, it is as social beings that we are unable to respond to them. We recognise the surge of their eloquence, but very much in the way that we recognise the power of a great orator or actor who speaks in a foreign tongue. It is not the same as being brought under the spell of a speaker who uses the language we have been accustomed to from babyhood, and which everyone about us understands.

An Edifice of Meaning

On William Empson—By JOHN FULLER

DESPITE THE INADEQUACIES of the genre, one ought to be very grateful for this book.¹ It's the first on Empson to appear if you discount one little American pamphlet and the volume on the poetry by Angelo Morelli, which has not been translated and which nobody here seems to have had a chance to read. We know very well that *Festschriften* are edited with a charitable inclusiveness and a publisher's goodwill, and that you can hardly trim X's rambling or Y's self-important gossip without seeming rudely to cut short what is, after all, a tribute; and if Z has just turned in something from the bottom drawer, well, that is meant to be a tribute too. You don't keep a man from the party for being in the wrong dress. For this reason, one has to bear with the long-winded, erratic and indiscreet, skip some essays that are not about Empson, and forgive the absence of an index in a book that costs nearly £5. There is enough here to compensate for such predictable defects, a more than adequate harmony of *Fest* and *Schrift*.

There is, for instance, a 32-page bibliography based on Peter Lowbridge's in the Empson number of the *Review*, which by being more inclusive in the apparently trivial areas of Empson's work (parodies, letters, reviews) provides a more solid basis for the curious reader to trace the sources and development of his ideas.

There is some genuinely interesting gossip from Cambridge contemporaries, insight into his teaching methods from a Japanese professor, an appraisal of his work in semantics from his old supervisor. Piece by piece the likeness of the critic and poet is assembled. Too often, of course, the emerging portrait enshrines merely the eccentric aristocrat, teaching Donne or Milton from memory on the great Chinese Retreat, skiing superbly with his head full of Complex Words, writing *Seven Types of Ambiguity* in a fortnight as an undergraduate, losing his best book, *The Faces of the Buddha*, or reading aloud from *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, the passage marked by a dried kipper-bone.

This view of our greatest critic was established early, by a respectfully derisive sketch in a 1929 *Granta* in fact, and is clearly one to be reckoned with. Kathleen Raine says it is "creating a norm in whatever circumstances", a sort of Wykehamist dinner-jacket-in-the-desert syndrome. The disregard for physical discomfort, the plain thinking at a time of moral and intellectual confusion, curiosity, eclectic tastes and a firm sense of priorities: these are valiant qualities, but no doubt unpopular ones. The general relief that Empson has spoken (whether on colonialism in "The Ancient Mariner", the sodomising of Lady Chatterley, or the disputed scepticism of Dryden) is usually matched by someone's irritation or rage. His friends convey a tone of puzzled respect, a sense of awed inadequacy, even of disingen-

¹ *William Empson: The Man and His Work*. Edited by ROMA GILL. Routledge, £4.95

uously assertive affection. "God knows", writes Miss Raine, "there was never a time, fly from myself as I might, when I was not glad to see William." George Fraser unwittingly provides a comic footnote: "She had avoided seeing him in recent years because she felt he was a captain in an opposite camp" (*i.e.* a poet of wit, not of vision like herself). But what *is* vision?

THE KIPPER-BONES (they crop up more than once) are the red-herrings they literally are. What Empson got from Anita Loos was the point that human ambition is serious after all, and that reductive wit (Dorothy making Louie take off his ridiculous spats and, when she saw his socks, making him put them on again) is actually a hindrance to vision. The fact that "Reflection from Anita Loos" is a villanelle makes his central point there about Christianity seem witty anyway, but the notes reveal the historical basis for his view of the trapped Christ:

Anyway the religion of love produced appalling cruelties when made a governmental institution, but it seems arguable that the ideas of Jesus himself got fatally connected under the stress of persecution with the official and moneymaking cult of blood sacrifice, which he had tried to combat.

This is the problem of the spats. How do you explain the gulf between the vision and the reality? "Gentlemen prefer bound feet and the

wasp waist." The girl is trapped, too. Love rules the world, but "it gives a million gambits for a mime/ On which a social system can be based."

A latish poem like this gives a mature perspective on the subject. He has come a long way from the tunnels, stars and insects of his knotted undergraduate work, and he can say a lot of things at the same time (about religious delusions, political conditions, the sex war) without seizing-up. It is something ultimate about the human condition he is after. In one of the most interesting pieces in the book, Karl Miller views with proper sympathy Empson's "recoil from Christianity" (he is good, too, on Empson's politics and, a lesser though significant matter, on his kinship with Dylan Thomas). Miller quotes Empson's view of a quarrel on the subject of Christianity with Rosemond Tuve who "seemed disposed to treat me as a pagan stumbling towards the light. Clearer now about what the light illuminates, I am keen to stumble away from it." Miller comments: "Often enough, the reaction to such strokes is to be offended, or to condescend as to some gallant freak or *farceur*. There are those who cannot bear him to be in earnest, let alone right. But he is both." Fine words. Empson *is* in fact a poet of vision, where the only true vision is a question of discovering what man's position in the world really is.

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THE SHOWPIECE of the collection is Christopher Ricks's long essay on the poetry, in which its guiding theme is seen to be how "life involves maintaining oneself between contradictions" (the phrase is taken from Empson's note to "Bacchus"). Man's position is at once noble and precarious, depending on circumstances both horrible and stimulating: though "the world is glorious beyond all telling" yet life is still essentially inadequate to the human spirit. Linked to such a paradox are mixed feelings about having children. The desire to propagate the species is in one sense an overriding one, and yet it must be wrong to bring children into a world which is so terrible. Such is the necessary "story" behind Empson's poetry, and Ricks spends a brilliant 63 pages demonstrating how the paradox invigorates a body of work already evidently obsessed with erotic fear-and-desire or the ape-and-essence duality of man.

This business of "story" in poetry is absolutely essential to Empson's strategy, I do agree, and it would have been salutary to have had a piece in the book sketching out his usefully anti-Imagist position. That poems must be about something is not granted in the same way that readers allow newspaper columns to be about something. In Empson's *Review* interview with Ricks he ended up by stressing just this:

It isn't what poets usually write about, that's all [i.e. the compulsiveness of the arms race in "Reflection from Rochester"]. Most poetry today is in the Imagist tradition, and it simply isn't the fashion in poetry to understand things; people understand these things in prose perfectly well. . . . The whole tendency of modern criticism has been not to encourage people to be as sensible as they would be if they had to deal with the matter really, in prose.

Ricks's way in to the "story" in Empson's poetry is appropriately by way of Donne. Donne, of course, together with Milton, remains the presiding spirit of Empson's verse, but whereas someone like Eliot found Donne's magpie treatment of broken fragments of systems the most interesting thing about him, Empson really liked him for quite different reasons:

We all said we liked him because he was so meta-physical, but I can see now that I really liked him because he argued, whereas the others felt this side of him needed handling tactfully, because it did not fit symbolist theory. The full doctrine says that all poetry consists only of a collage of logically unrelated images, and an American student once tried to prove to me that this was true of my own poetry. This made me realise that I had always considered the theory entirely wrong.

Other American students were, no doubt, at the same time trying to show that the images in Dylan Thomas were related logically (there is a whole book on the "Altarwise by Owl-light" sequence)

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but comparing their methods is something usefully yet to be done. What might emerge from it, I think, is that the straits Empson sometimes gets into result from the attempt to maintain a polymetaphorical structure, a storeyed edifice of meaning, whereas Thomas indulges in linear association backwards and forwards, the couplings of a shunted train.

But meaning is the key, and I only wish that I felt that Ricks had hit upon the exclusively essential keyhole. He goes so far as to suggest that Empson's abandonment of poetry, which dates roughly from his marriage in 1941 and consequent parenthood, is a result of the slackening of the earlier tension about whether or not to beget life. Clearly the basic urge to write was lost at about this time, but seizing on Empson's marriage seems too simple an explanation. If there is any explaining to be done about Empson's publishing career it is, surely, not why he more or less stopped in 1940, but why he wrote fewer poems after 1930 and how the poems of the 'thirties are different from poems of the 'twenties (ten a year on average before 1930, just over two thereafter). But this is idle speculation, and Ricks does show subtlety and delicacy in putting forward his thesis. It fits in with the "boy being afraid of girl" scenario of so many of his early pieces even if it doesn't quite square with the more public themes of *The Gathering Storm* (the title ruined by Churchill, though equally pregnant of approaching political doom).

Ricks certainly tries to make it fit. There is a ghostly card-index of references to parenthood lurking behind his argument at many points. A couple of instances will suffice. He quotes some lines from that manic tribute to the indulged apocalypse and the rhyming dictionary, "Just a Smack at Auden":

*Shall I send a wire, boys? What is there to send?
All are under fire, boys, waiting for the end.
Shall I turn a sire, boys? Shall I choose a friend?
The fat is in the pyre, boys, waiting for the end.*

Ricks doesn't at all shirk the complexity of this poem's tone, but is led into some special pleading when he remarks: " 'Shall I turn a sire, boys?': it is a scorching question, and of the three *Shall I's* here, the only one which needed to be clad in the asbestos of whimsical wording." Ricks doesn't acknowledge the way in which the whole poem, with some bravura, consists of phrases of this kind blandly plunging to their obscure chime:

*Not a chance of blend, boys, things have got to tend.
Think of those who vend, boys, think of how we wend.*

So in a sense it is Ricks not Empson who is stylistically armoured at this point (his metaphor protects his judgment from serious enquiry).

ANOTHER INSTANCE of slight strain comes in Ricks's treatment of "Invitation to Juno" which he sees as "being about a transcendent act of breeding" and dismisses for lacking the real human situation which can "convince our nerves." Hot on the trail of worried fatherhood, Ricks is led in this case to mistake both the import and the mood of the argument, and consequently, I believe, to undervalue what is a charmingly eccentric love poem. This one is short enough to quote in full:

*Lucretius could not credit centaurs;
Such bicycle he deemed asynchronous.
'Man superannuates the horse;
Horse pulses will not gear with ours.'*

*Johnson could see no bicycle would go;
'You bear yourself, and the machine as well.'
Gennets for germans sprang not from Othello,
And Ixion rides upon a single wheel.*

*Courage. Weren't strips of heart culture seen
Of late mating two periodicities?
Could not Professor Charles Darwin
Graft annual upon perennial trees?*

Ricks's central point is beautifully and forcefully put, as we would expect from a critic of his intelligence and humour:

It admonishes: "Courage." But there is not enough fear for it to mean more than cheer up. And that is because no woman—no sense of woman—is allowed into it; Juno, or rather the cloud that simulated her, lurks only in the title, and the poem grants all its room to males; Lucretius, Dr Johnson, Othello, Ixion, and Charles Darwin. Like a club; Invitation to Athenaeum.

Fine, but isn't this to ignore the "story"? The poem is a learned wooing poem, and its clubland members on the whole exist to be exposed. The authorities are undermined, the heroes shown to be duped. The girl should be encouraged after all, and this surely is the sense of "Courage": not so much "cheer up", but "be decisive" or "have the courage of your (or my) convictions." I don't think the question of *fear* has anything to do with it.

What must the girl take heart about? The argument in the first two stanzas tells her that two bodies are better than one, that one body is a solipsistic hell like Ixion condemned to his revolving wheel. If the poet (presumptuous mortal) were to make love to her (the traditional goddess) things might not be so bad as she imagines. Their union could produce demigods, because even the centaurs actually fathered by Ixion upon the deceiving cloud-image of Juno were not believed in by the rational Lucretius. Anyway he is compared with Dr Johnson not believing in bicycles (Empson claims that Johnson says this somewhere in Boswell, but no one as far as I know has found

it, so he is no doubt thinking of the flying machine in *Rasselas*). Johnson was wrong, because bicycles do work. And this twist is supported by showing that Iago's jibe about Brabantio being likely to end up with horses for relations was a racially prejudiced lie, itself part of a scheme to prevent Othello and Desdemona from producing perfectly possible half-castes.

THE ORIGINAL POEM, as printed in *The Cambridge Review*, 4 May 1928, had two additional stanzas. The first of them at this point stressed the sterility of hybrids ("And can we, my dear, smile/ At mule or hinny our estates entail?") so I admit that the word "Courage" which follows would have added force as a *volte face* leading into the contemporary examples from biology and botany. The other extra stanza came at the end of the poem, and provided a trimorphic solution with a semi-comic religious metaphor that was much better left out. As it stands the point is that the girl can't claim that their differences should keep them apart; nor should she reject the sensual part of man's nature. Though clever, he is a lover. The hybrid tree shows that the common mating urge (annual) is compatible with family and lineage (perennial).

The rather tentative oblique way in which scientific research is presented ("Weren't strips of heart culture seen/ Of late mating two periodicities?") may be designed as a hedging of bets: the rhetorical questions will both convince the girl ("please correct me if I'm wrong, but you know I'm right") and bestow a Lucretian scepticism ("I've heard of it, and it probably is written up somewhere, but it remains a rumour until I've checked"). Man is a creature of intellect and passion, really a kind of centaur after all. The argument circles giddily. But it is not an argument to convince the Club. No doubt it is an example of argufying, what Empson described as "the kind of arguing we do in ordinary life, usually to get our own way."

I think that having children is part of it obviously, but not that aspect of having children which relates to the central and fearful paradox about life which Ricks expounds. Offspring are here a symbol of union, not a material element within it. But really this is a minor quibble: the energy and sympathy of Ricks's readings command respect, and are a worthy tribute to one of our significant poets. The book is worth getting for his contribution alone.

A Masterpiece Restored

Translating a Chinese Classic — By TAO TAO SANDERS

THE UNOBTUSIVE APPEARANCE of this book in Penguin Classics is a landmark in the translation of works of literature from the Chinese into English.¹ It finally does justice to the original novel, being the first of five volumes of a complete translation by David Hawkes of a great Chinese work. The title somewhat disguises the book already known to the West as *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. *The Story of the Stone* was an alternative title but little used after publication. Its greatness has had up till now to be taken on trust since the abbreviated versions in English scarcely confirmed it.

The world is divided into those who passionately love the book and those who say that they have never managed to finish reading it. The cast of characters is enormous and, to the English, apt to be a little confusing because of the similarity of the names and the fact that they nearly all have the surname Jia; however, the translator

has compiled a family tree of the most important people. Whether you like the book or not has ultimately something to do with whether you prefer a work of art to have clean outlines or find even greater satisfaction in something of a richer texture, with intricate threads weaving in and out, sometimes wholly submerged, and sometimes even allowed to hang loose.

The novel was unfinished at the death of Cao Xueqin or Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in (according to whichever system of romanisation you like; the unaccustomed x's and q's belong to the system favoured by Peking nowadays): 80 out of an intended 120 chapters had been written. These 80 chapters contain the core of the book, and clearly foreshadow the events of the last 40. The novel circulated in manuscript as it was being written. Publication of the book completed by other people only came after the author's death in 1763, and then there were different editions with rival endings. The version that came to be established was done by a man called Gao E, who in spite of much recent opprobrium probably did

¹ *The Story of the Stone*. Translated by DAVID HAWKES. Penguin, 75p.

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only edit the fragments of the author's own manuscript, or the manuscript of someone very close to the author. It was not until well into this century that some pre-publication manuscript with important glosses appeared. So the question of text is a vexed one, rivalling the Quartos of Shakespeare. Since the reader soon realises that the story must be based on experience, there arose a major industry in identifying the various characters in the book and their relationship to the author. In fact the surfacing of earlier manuscripts did not put an end to this, and glosses by people who appeared to have known the author personally positively encouraged greater speculation, resembling the identification of Mr. W. H. More and more scholarly studies are emerging, and continue the heated controversy, but probably there can be no positive identification of the characters, though the events were based on life. Like any novelist Cao often made composite portraits, juggled the time sequence and changed the degree of kinship between characters. He was looking at the past, at what happened in his youth, and inevitably heightened the colours of life in that rich mansion.

A Dream of Golden Days is what the translator has called his first volume, which is in fact a better rendering of the Chinese *hong-lou meng* from which came the well-known English title of the novel, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. The word "chamber" is something of a mistranslation: the word *lou* means a "storied building, a mansion" and when coupled with the word *hong*, "red", implies opulence and grandeur. The words came to acquire the specialised meaning of the dwellings of rich men's daughters, or even the daughters themselves. At the same time they cannot avoid association with the Buddhist phrase *hong chen*, "red dust", which designates worldly glory and pleasures, in which connection the word *meng*, "dream", is also quite appropriate; the Buddhist concept of the evanescence of life weaves in and out of this novel. The title of the novel itself gives a taste of its characteristic complexity and ambiguity.

Although the novel is firmly based on traditional Chinese fiction, it is the most modern of Classical Chinese novels in its psychological analysis of character. (Other novels known to the West are *Journey to the West*, extracts of which were translated by Arthur Waley as *The Monkey*, *The Water Margin* and *Golden Lotus*). The hero of *The Story of the Stone* is Bao-yu, an intelligent, sensitive and delicately reared young man, who refuses to conform to the pattern of a budding civil servant expected by his father, and retreats into the rear apartments, the female preserve, where live his female cousins and other relatives. These women, especially two girls, Lin Dai-yu

and Xue Bao-chai, who are both in love with Bao-yu, are shown to be the intellectual and moral superior of the men who dominate them socially. The girls and Bao-yu live an apparently idyllic life, the climax of which was the occupation of the houses and cottages that are built in a garden of extravagant conception in honour of the visit of the Imperial Concubine, who is a sister of Bao-yu.

THE CENTRAL THEME of the novel is the relationship between Bao-yu and Lin Dai-yu, embodied in the enigmatic preamble to the novel in which a Taoist in search of immortality comes upon a story carved upon a magical stone; in a former incarnation, a small Flower is cherished by the Stone who waters it every day, and the Flower repays him in this world with a debt of tears. Lin Dai-yu is beautiful and extremely talented, but sickly. Her sensitive nature also makes her suffer in seeing hurt where none is intended. Her intolerance of vulgarity, hypocrisy and the empty learning by rote of the classics by careerist Confucian scholars finds a response in Bao-yu. It is her companionship that he prefers to that of Xue Bao-chai, an equally intelligent girl, but one who is more worldly-wise, and lacks the purity of Lin Dai-yu. We become aware from early on that Lin Dai-yu is ill-fated, and Bao-yu's love and concern for her will be in vain.

This forms the centre of the story, but it is surrounded by a huge array of characters. We are watching the interaction between various members of a large household with their hangers-on and servants; the tensions in personal relationships, the understandings and misunderstandings, the hypocrisy and subterfuges employed by a large number of people living at close quarters. One of the most memorable characters is Xi-feng, the shrewd manager of the household, a pretty young woman, clever and witty, and not at all above nefarious schemes that collect power and money into her own hands. There is also Grannie Liu, a self-proclaimed poor relation from the country who sponges off the family in the nicest possible way, a good-hearted, vulgar, wily old woman who is not afraid of making a fool of herself for the entertainment of her rich patrons; her liveliness and resourcefulness contrast with the feebleness of the Matriarch, Lady Jia. Ostensibly their society is sheltered, leisured and cultivated, but inside each person there is terror, and the very foundations on which the house rest seem at times perilously fragile.

A description such as I have given is bound to make the novel sound rather serious and heavy, but that is the last thing that can be said of it. Like other great novels it carries a world within itself, the comedy as well as the tragedy. There is

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a great deal of humour, sometimes uproarious, sometimes just unobtrusively showing us the absurdity of people and situations. For instance when Bao-yu in spite of his efforts gets caught by his father making an inspection tour round the half-completed garden, he is subjected to a sort of literary test to rather unpredictable comments from his father while a crowd of sycophants sing changing tunes.

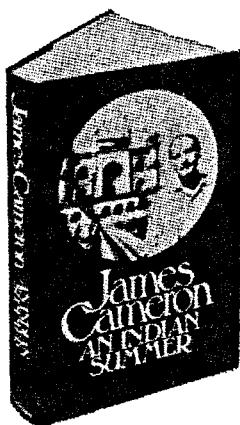
A TRANSLATION that sounds right to the English ear is a very different thing from a literal translation that turns every word from the Chinese into English, rather as an examination candidate would. David Hawkes has translated what the author has written in Chinese so that it has exactly the same meaning and effect on the English ear without being a precise word for word count: he had a reader in mind, not an academic exercise, and consequently the rich texture of the original has been preserved. It is not at all an easy achievement; as anyone who has attempted it will know, there is constant temptation to translate literally because it is such hard work to cast around for a true equivalent. Translating literally is always safe, though the result is to emasculate the original. Not everyone knows

both languages well enough to avoid this trap, nor has everyone a gifted writer's sensitivity to words. Now one knows it can be done, and for future translators it is a standard of excellence that will be hard to emulate.

This book presents special difficulties, partly in its language, a refined colloquial in the northern dialect, and partly in its subtle use by the author to convey nuances, puns and a great deal of humour, especially in the dialogue. The translator has to be alert to the significance of the smallest shift of inflexion in both Chinese and English. Of the two most obvious examples of his skill, one is the rendering of the dialogue into English on the right level and with the right manner of speech according to the speaker's class and character, and the other is the translation of the verse which liberally sprinkles the text; it was shunned by former translators, thereby losing a large part of the author's intentions and the original atmosphere. If one knows Chinese, one admires not only the consistent accuracy but the ingenuity of every part of this translation; if one does not know Chinese one still admires the style as English style. What Scott Moncrieff did for Proust, David Hawkes has done for Cao Xueqin.

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What Shall We Do about Anthony Burgess?

New Fiction—By JONATHAN RABAN

THREE YEARS AGO when *MF* came out, Anthony Burgess left his reviewers floundering in egg. We were presented with a book which appeared to have all its screws loose. There was undoubtedly a Welsh-speaking bird queen in it; also a legendary poet with the unlikely, possibly anagrammatic name of Sib Legeru. There was a lot about incest and riddles, and on the penultimate page it was revealed that the main character was a negro. Beyond that, it was all thick epistemological pea-soup. Reviewers, though, have a doubtful small shopkeepers' instinct for muddling through, and are only temporarily miffed by utter incomprehension. The man in *The Times* gazed awestruck at the book, and declared that it was just like Crick and Watson's double-helix. Christopher Ricks laid out the names of Chesterton, Murdoch, Durrell and Joyce, like a poker player passing off deuces as aces.

It was Professor Kermode, writing in *The Listener* in his familiar guise as M. Dupin, who set all to rights. *MF* was an extended gloss of a passage in Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Scope of Anthropology*. In a few deft exegetical strokes, Burgess was unriddled and the novel, now as lucid as one of Professor Kermode's own articles, was held up for our amazed admiration. Its intellectual ingenuity had been certainly proven, but I still found the writing careless and shrill. Kermode dearly loves a theory and is exasperatingly given to calling any work a masterpiece which lends itself to a display of his own classroom legerdemain of ideas. *MF* might have been written for the express purpose of allowing Professor Kermode to construe it with his customary erudition. But the problem of Burgess remains. He is surely the most intelligent English novelist alive—the only man writing in distinctively British English who can match, say, Günter Grass or Saul Bellow in sheer mental energy and

agility. The question is whether he is a clever man who dabbles in anthropology, history, criticism and metaphysics, then dresses these interests up in fiction—a sort of storytelling Frank Kermode; or whether he is a novelist whose whole ability to think and feel is inseparably bound to the form of prose narrative. Is he, in fact, really a novelist at all?

TWO NEW NOVELS by Burgess have appeared within the last four months: *The Clockwork Testament or: Enderby's End*¹ and *Napoleon Symphony*.² There's a lot of overlap between them. Both are about artists—men trying to scratch a vision on a rude and messy world. Enderby sits in a rented apartment in New York writing an epic poem on the nature of free will and predestination, phrased in the form of a dialogue between Saint Augustine and Pelagius. Napoleon careers round Europe, changing the map. Both, to plagiarise C. M. Doughty's description of the Semites, stand up to their waists in cloaca while their heads touch heaven. Their stomachs rumble; they are creatures of their own bowel movements and stirring phalluses. 19th-century Europe and the modern American city are, quite literally in Burgess's world, covered in blood and shit. Yet Napoleon and Enderby are touched with the heroic irrelevance of art. They are saintly fools who can't—and in this lies their grandeur—see that what they're doing is monstrous or absurd. Both die, and the final pages of each novel bristle with hints of resurrection. In *Napoleon Symphony* the letters I.N.R.I. get into the woof of the sentences; in *Enderby's End*, with Enderby sprawled naked and fouled after a fatal heart seizure, there is an epitaph, of sorts:

Do not think that anyone can escape it merely by. . . I will not utter the word: it is quite irrelevant. Out of it, indeed; he is not out of it at all.

In art, in visions, in the awkward, silly, indomitable human spirit, there are no endings, nor any opportunities for escape into oblivion. Burgess, who once nicely described himself (in a *Transatlantic Review* interview) as "a Catholic Jacobite",

¹ *The Clockwork Testament or: Enderby's End*. By ANTHONY BURGESS. Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, £1.95.

² *Napoleon Symphony*. By ANTHONY BURGESS. Cape, £3.25.

is interested in revealing the heroic in a world so gone to bad that it would seem incapable of supporting even the meanest sort of heroism. And these two novels are versions of an heroic fiction which is essentially didactic and theological.

The Clockwork Testament or: Enderby's End, much the most immediately likeable of the two, takes the form of scurrilous satire. It jeers loudly at American Universities, the Film and Television industry, Women's Lib, Black Power, and so on—all familiar targets to readers of Burgess's series of "Viewpoints" in the *T.L.S.* last year. Burgess has reinvented America for his own convenience and turned it into a fair replica of hell. Among the maniacs, louts, loud-mouths and philistines who make up the population of New York, Enderby is a sort of Crusoe, utterly alone. A movie of *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, for which he wrote the original (and unused) screenplay, is supposedly sending gangs of youths out of cinemas all over the world in search of nuns to rape. He is the recipient of anonymous phone calls and invitations to appear on chat shows. His students are stupid bigots; his TV set emits a continuous blare of twaddle; his poem about Pelagius and Augustine goes badly. This is a place where human beings blame their own badness on their artists, and

where ignorance and illiteracy are proudly paraded as civilised virtues.

In a marvellously funny transcription of Enderby's appearance on the "Sperr Lansing Show", Burgess shows language itself turning to nonsense under the strain. Enderby's description of the Pelagian Heresy comes out as:

A British Monkey called Morgan in Greek Plage us (?????) taught no national pensity (?) to evil. Errorsy (?). Evils in everybody.

"Violence" changes to "violets"; "totalitarian" to "teetotal Aryan." The apprentice poets in the creative writing class treat verse either as a way of keeping a diary of their sexual exploits or as an ancillary weapon in the race war ("It will be your balls next, whitey. . . . It will be your prick next, whitey. . . ."—a poem which, as Enderby points out, retains its form perfectly with the substitution of the word "nigger"). Even Enderby's own careful, tart poems—Enright crossed with Amis—turn out to have taken possession of the mind of a mad female professor who arrives at his apartment toting a gun, determined to make him first urinate over his collected works, then to kill him.

Too many of the reviewers of *The Clockwork Testament* were obsessed by the fact that Burgess calls this dreadful place "New York", and twitted him for his savage, anti-American illiberalism.

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That is not the point. What he has done is to create a grotesque society which has no use for art or history except as instruments of shallow and vicious propaganda. Enderby is the only real person in the world because he is the only one who lives fully in his language. The rest are creatures of slogans and factory-made gibberish. Enderby isn't a good man—isn't even much of a poet. His only claim to virtue rests in his testy, independent ownership of his own words. He growls and grumbles his way through the book—but it is his own way. And the novel ends with a miracle. Just before Enderby dies, he looks at the television screen and sees there a film “in very good colour too” of Augustine and Pelagius. In the appalling city, itself the result of a monstrous abnegation of free will, the debate goes on. Enderby, though dead, lives because he exemplifies the most important freedom of all—to keep one's own language alive. His only heroic action in the novel is to defend a woman in a subway train with a swordstick; a quaint weapon. The rage which boils inside *The Clockwork Testament* is directed against any view of life which would set words beside swordsticks, as archaic curiosities. It's not that Enderby is not dead, but that he must not be allowed to die.

THE CLOCKWORK TESTAMENT is as direct as a sermon. It is a just homily. *Napoleon Symphony* sometimes seems as long, as complicated, and as intermittently boring, as the whole of the Old Testament. Insuring against a repetition of the brouhaha which attended *MF*, Burgess brings up the rear of the novel with an Epistle to the Reader—a handsome apologia-cum-explication of the work, done in fair doggerel verse. It is indispensable. The shape of the book is borrowed from Beethoven's “Eroica” symphony; an elaborate, contrapuntal arrangement of themes and variations, done in “movements” of varying pace and style. It is really as much a scrapbook as a symphony, for the musical metaphor has allowed Burgess to open the form of the novel to a continuous, intuitive improvisation.

It is often as indistinctly allusive as music. Napoleon himself swells and fades in and out of the narrative. A gaggle of politicians in Paris suddenly looms close, to dissolve into a chorus of swearing soldiers. The battle sequences come up, a thundering *ff.*, and die, to be replaced by the silky bitches of drawing-room diplomacy. Cut to Josephine, rousting in bed back home at the Tuileries; and back to Napoleon, cuckolded, half-mad, engineering a new Europe in blood, gangrene, and frostbite. Only the last sequence,



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with Napoleon exiled and dying on Elba, comes entirely clean as a narrative, and that has the autumnal exactness of a Chekhov short story.

There are two obvious ways of getting one's bearings. One is to follow the musical parallels with the "Eroica"—a task for which I am hopelessly unfitted. In any case, even if someone comes up with a list of every point of correspondence between Burgess and Beethoven, it will prove only that the critic has worked hard and that Burgess is ingenious. It will not make *Napoleon Symphony* better or worse as a novel. The other way (and it is intimately, and dangerously, linked with the first) is to regard the book as a vast exercise in parody and pastiche.

Which to some degree, it certainly is. Much of the writing is onomatopoeic—that is to say, it imitates in sound, tone and pace what it describes. In battle and on the march, Burgess takes off from Joyce into a stream of something—not quite consciousness, exactly—but more a lot of get out of my line of fire before I spew, you prickless creampuff etcetera. Taken at random, almost any paragraph of this will be brilliantly written: but taken in context, reading the stuff is just like being in a battle. One hears a great deal of noise. One doesn't know where one is. One aches for silence and just one clear command from that superior officer, the novelist.

OUT OF BATTLE, the pastiche is of a directly literary kind. *Napoleon Symphony* is full of perfectly-done imitations of Pope, Byron, Wordsworth, Dickens, Hardy and other writers, including Enderby. They work as games and commentaries, and are interleaved with the action. Burgess's narrative prose has a habit of breaking into rhyme and metre, as if he was working the language to breaking point. But his style is invariably imitative. Every sentence has a model, in life or literature, so that one finds oneself testing it not for truth but for aptness—applauding hits and deprecating misses. The reasons why these words are here in this particular position lie outside, not inside the novel.

This odd *outsideness* of the writing extends to the whole conception of the novel. Not only is it based on another work in a different form, but it takes life from a metaphor rooted, again, in anthropology. At the end of the book, Napoleon says:

The fields of heroism are, I think, manifold; mine was that of a *head of arms*, head of an army, head of an armed state.

The body of the individual, the body of the army, and the body of the state are finally coterminous. Napoleon excretes; France drops the turds of war on Prussia. Everything that happens in the novel—the whole vainglorious career of moving armies,

grumbling civilians, sexual treachery and failure—is a representation of a body politic which is also Napoleon's own, haemorrhoid-ridden, liverish and angry body. The turmoil of Europe at war happens inside the frame of one man who is himself only a heroic dream, a fiction.

Death comes to Napoleon in the form of a wise lady out of a legend, who reveals to him that he is both a bad novelist and a figment in a novelist's imagination. "You created your men out of clay, though to create women you had no power," she tells him sternly:

"You could have been made, and made rather well by some master of that kind of artefaction—in words, you know. Then there would not have to have been all that *cauchemar* of flesh and blood spilled about, and that notable cruelty to horses."

The tragedy of Napoleon, and his claim to heroism, is that he would not recognise that he was inessential to history. The wars were real and dreadful, Burgess seems to say, but they were also chimerical—fantastic acts of an imagination which might or might not have been Napoleon's. Like Enderby, he turns out to have been the artist as victim, divorced not just from his creations but from his creators too. He is left to die and be dissected at just the moment when he has learned to doubt the reality of his own existence.

I have only nibbled round the edge of this vastly complicated book, but, as I hope I have suggested, the ideas on which it is hung have a remarkable collective force. The trouble is that they have rather more force than the novel itself. Reading *Napoleon Symphony* is not unlike reading an account of a great novel by an agile and sophisticated critic. Everything is justified, explained, demonstrated, given illustration, but it does not quite come alive. For Burgess has almost every talent needed by a great novelist—immense intelligence, inventive vigour, a wonderful sense of the play of language, a genius for pastiche—except one. He cannot make another human being come to life on the page. He has a single vivid character: an all-purpose *homme moyen sensuel* who goes under the name of "Enderby" or "Anthony Burgess", and farts and scratches his way through seedy cities and knockabout scrapes. The rest are sawdust; or, like Sergeant Trouncer in *Napoleon Symphony*, a splendid Dickensian imitation, they are spoofs. But Napoleon himself is more of a theory than a man—Leavis's Anna Karenina rather than Tolstoy's. And yet, and yet . . . Burgess's abilities are enormous. Better, perhaps, a crippled great novelist like him than a perfectly accomplished minor writer who would never dare the heights that Burgess so very nearly scales.

³ *Ending Up*. By KINGSLEY AMIS. Cape, £1.95.

WHAT BURGESS FAILS AT, Kingsley Amis does with near-contemptuous ease. He can make his characters stand up on the page like brilliant cut-outs springing to life as one opens the book. Everybody has a funny voice and a distinctive, usually remarkably ghastly, suit of clothes. If you look closely, you can see the jagged cardboard edges, but Amis gets them into action so fast that only a very sour critic indeed would complain of their coarse colours and rather hasty scissorwork. His new novel, *Ending Up*,³ is one of the best he's ever done: a brutal comedy which is not so much about old age as about the problem of why people ever bother to get born at all.

He has incarcerated five old fools in a rural English Charenton called Tuppenny-hapenny Cottage, where he leaves them to lose their memories and get on each other's nerves. One suffers from a complaint known as "nominal aphasia" whereby all the domestic substantives of this world have already deserted him; another finds the whole of her past life going absent in chunks. Another has lived only as the shadow of her brother and her friend. Even before they all drop dead within minutes of each other, in a casually contrived splash of grand guignol, they have little enough life left to lose. Yet to themselves and to each other they are "characters." The more sketchy and indefinite their lives become, the

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more they nourish their own eccentricities, clinging to old slang, old opinions, or new quirks of temper and humour, in order to assert their now dubious existence in the world. Their sense of grieved loss shows up in almost every sentence, but Amis will not allow them even that justifiable pathos. To George, the nominal aphasic, he restores his nouns. From then on, George gibbers in gratuitous details, naming everything. He was better off nounless. And so it is with the others. If the story were run backwards—if Marigold were given back her marriage in Beauchamp Place, Bernard his career in the army, Shorty his barrack-room skives and fiddles—things would be no different. Only Adela, who never had a claim to life in the first place, has the dignity of consistency at least.

There are no let-outs. Amis introduces a crew of dutiful grandchildren and their offspring, come to spread a bit of tiresome Christmas spirit among the old folk. The two young men, their own mannerisms already ripe to the point of desiccation, stand together in the lavatory taking a breather from the awfulness of the festivities.

"We'll be just the same when we get to their age."
"Oh no we won't. Horrible, yes. Boring, sure. But not like them."

Only the slang and the ailments will be changed'

In the hands of anyone else, *Ending Up* should have been an unbearably bleak book. But Amis sets in on his old people with the relish of Billy Bunter at a dorm feast. He turns weakness and pretension into good copy, and, oddly in a novel which affects such weariness at the vanity of human life, infects us so thoroughly with his enjoyment that the whole thing becomes a long whoop of delight. One feels that, unlike Larkin, whose poem "The Old Fools" shares a lot of surface features with *Ending Up*, Amis does not really mean what he says. His pessimism, finally, doesn't stand a chance against the overweening force of his good humour.

⁴ *Holiday*. By STANLEY MIDDLETON. Hutchinson, £2.75.

BY CONTRAST with both Burgess and Amis, Stanley Middleton seems to believe that life is too important to be muddled by the exaggerations and embellishments of fiction. *Holiday*⁴ is about a man on the run from rhetoric. Edwin Fisher spends a week at a seaside boarding-house in the town where he used to go on holiday as a boy. His marriage is on the rocks, his identity shaky. His problem is to learn to live in the world, not to interpret it. He is surrounded by people who treat life very much like novelists, transforming it with eloquence to the point where they inhabit their own metaphors rather than the uncomfortable, resolutely uneloquent, house of reality.

Middleton's great strength is his fairness: he is not afraid to give the devil the best tunes. In Edwin's father-in-law, a smooth-tongued Welsh lawyer, he has created a splendidly persuasive rhetorician who seduces the reader rather more effectively than he seduces Edwin himself. And he endows Edwin's fellow-boarders with an enviable solidity as they move comfortably inside their own limited but certain idiom. But all these people are here to deflect Fisher from his real purpose, to get at the reality of things without benefit of rhetoric and its distortions. The novel persistently rejects answers that another novel might have eagerly seized on. It values honesty and accuracy with a puritanical rigour, and searches them out in a prose set in such a low key that sometimes it is barely audible.

The rewards of Middleton's writing are small surprises. The sudden flash of brightness from a dim girl on a beach; the exact colour of the sea; a new overtone in an old event remembered again; an uncharacteristic oddity of phrase. It is a kind of writing which is bent on noticing things that rhetoricians would pass over, and it allows characters a freedom to be themselves. *Holiday* is glum and admirable. It looks over its shoulder at the rest of contemporary fiction with a schoolmaster's stern eye, and the lesson it teaches is essentially a corrective one, a series of "don'ts." Whatever the fable says, though, I wouldn't in this case back the tortoise against the hare.

DISCUSSION

Robbins to Sloman to Annan

Mushroom Universities

By A. L. Rowse

DEAN JOHN SILBER HAS PLACED the question of university education, of freedom of discussion within it, the attacks upon it, its visible failings, opening up the whole problem of its values, upon the high ground of principle ("Poisoning The Wells of Academe" ENCOUNTER, August). As such it seems to me that his statement of the position, the basis upon which the idea of a university rests and its function and use in society, is unanswerable. I shall not repeat what he says: I totally agree with him; my own contribution will be on the lower, but not less important, ground of the practical.

But, first, a word of personal explanation on the matter of principle. I claim to be, in the realm of ends, a liberal, a rationalist, and a humanist. But this should not imply that, in the realm of means, one falls for liberal illusions as to human nature, or a superficial rationalist psychology, assuming that the mass of men are rational, or even reasonable. For years I have always named that the Rationalist Fallacy.

All through the 1930s I watched liberals being their own worst enemies, betraying the best of causes—indeed the right causes—by the sheer ineffectiveness of their assumptions, hamstrung by their doctrines. The idea, for instance, that you should allow people who hated democracy, liberty of speech, etc., the liberty to destroy it! This is how the Weimar Republic destroyed itself, allowing the Nazis—"Wir schiessen auf die Freiheit"—the freedom to undermine the Republic from within. Sheer liberal ineffectiveness—which Hitler understood through and through, and with the contempt it deserved: it *helped* him to destroy itself.

I watched the process with anger and despair—and I see liberals at it again, selling the pass over education, ruining the universities by their fatuous ineffectiveness, hamstrung by their silly "convictions"—when the simple principle to follow, with students and (worse) members of faculty who do not believe in freedom of speech and are out to overthrow the institutions upon

which they are parasites, is to *throw them out*. (As with Rudi Dutschke. Remember?)

There is a more fundamental matter that liberals will not face, will hardly allow themselves to recognise, let alone give expression to it. It is a plain fact of psychological common sense that the great bulk of people do not qualify for university education, and cannot respond to its opportunities in any worth-while or significant way. The truth is, and always has been, that the absurd expansion of numbers has meant and must mean a lowering of standards. Of course *More Means Worse*.

There is a regular conspiracy of silence about this, a refusal to recognise the plain and evident facts of human nature. It has taken the shocking behaviour of large sections of university students to bring this home. A large minority of them do not want to be there for any good purpose, to take advantage of the precious opportunities made available at great expense, are perhaps not capable of doing so, many of them—so why keep them there?

Even Dean Silber's article did not clearly recognise that Size, Numbers, Quantity are the essence of the problem. There are far too many students; they should be more rigorously sieved; we want only those who qualify. The rest should go—and be doing something more in keeping with their talents.

TEN YEARS AGO it was almost impossible to get a hearing for common sense in these matters—as a clever friend of mine puts it, "*In the sixties the softies were on top.*" Remember, to be a liberal as regards ends does not mean that one should be as softie as to means; believers in good causes need to be as effective and tough as believers in bad causes usually are.

While all the discussion about University Expansion, the Robbins Report and all the hoolala was going on I was in the United States, in a position to see the consequences on a good many campuses there. I was in San Francisco lecturing at a State College the night Clark Kerr resigned from Berkeley, the career of a distinguished liberal-minded Quaker ruined by falling over backwards to meet the demands of unappeasable students. (Appeasement is always a mistake—I see the proctors at Oxford have just woken up to this fact of life.) I remember the way Clark Kerr's sacrifice was taken by the miscreants who brought it about, the placards put out saying "Serves him right for his rotten liberalism", etc. In a sense it was: one should *never* foster illusions, if one wants to be effective on behalf of the best causes—such as University Education.

My oldest American friend was an eminent

liberal—Allan Nevins, the historian. For two or three years Berkeley was convulsed by disturbances, losing its ablest scientific professors, auditorium burnt down, etc. Nevins and I were the closest of friends at the Huntington Library. I remember how naively he questioned a friend returning from the front at Berkeley as to the issues in discussion—our informant replied as naively that he hadn't heard any "issues" discussed, merely "campus-politics." Of course—I laughed to myself, hardly openly in the great liberal's presence.

When the Robbins Report came out—would you believe it—Nevins actually wanted to force me to say that I agreed with it! An almighty row raged over that one. Nobody could *make* me say that I agreed with what I knew to be nonsense—the whole underlying assumption that there was a large reservoir of ability not yet drawn upon, that university numbers were capable of indefinite expansion—profitably to the country or advantageously to the cause of education.

"We began our discussion of principles by emphasising the claims of numbers. It is only fitting that we should close it by emphasising the claims of achievement and quality. The two ends are not incompatible."

A typical example of the Committee Mentality of having-it-both-ways. The whole question is one of proportion, of numbers and balance and timing—above all, of aiming at quality. An endemic feature of American civilisation is to equate Quantity with Quality—and look at their state-universities in consequence! I have been on campuses where the students hardly did any reading at all—they were often keen and alert, and imbibed topical information by a process of osmosis, from T.V. and chatter and the glossies they looked at. And certainly their professors couldn't write—the recognisable failing of American academics. John Silber is a distinguished exception. Even he takes to figures: "Even more *impressive* were the figures for doctorates: the last pre-Sputnik class had numbered 9,000; by 1964 there were 15,000 Ph.D.s." This does not impress me, knowing too well what the quality of American Ph.D. work in history and literature is. The very idea of a university—see John Henry Newman on the subject—stands or falls by Quality.¹

¹ Ethico-statistics is becoming a transatlantic disease. Louis Heren, writing in *The Times* (London, 21 August) on Nelson Rockefeller, notes: "... his record as Governor of New York was no less distinguished. For instance, the state university had 38,000 students when he was elected. That number had grown to 246,000 when he resigned"

NEVINS REPEATED THE ARGUMENT of the Report—imbibed from *The Guardian*, of course—that "unless higher education is speedily reformed there is little hope of this densely populated island maintaining an adequate position in the fiercely competitive world of the future." This statement—so like a committee's—begs the question at issue. If the aim was for this country to maintain its competitive position in the world, that is an argument for spending the money on technical education—this is a technological world, and we should be thinking of Exports, and not wasting our resources on palaver about Sociology. As a matter of psychological fact, a very limited number of men-students learn significantly from *literae humaniores*, from languages and literature—they haven't the linguistic or artistic sensibility. A lifetime's experience of schools and universities has taught me that practical studies and elementary disciplines are best for people of ordinary capacities. As for their "research"—we shall shortly have it brought home to us that growing food is more important.

The second comment to make on that typically muddled statement of the Robbins Report is that the only hope of "this densely populated island" (I should amend this to "over-populated") maintaining any position in a fiercely competitive world—since we obviously cannot compete quantitatively with the resources of super-powers like the US and Russia—is to concentrate on Quality. And this is what has been gravely endangered by the ill-considered, over-rapid, and far too large expansion of mushroom universities. Our resources would be much better employed on technological institutes, such as M.I.T. or Cal. Tech.—and it is a significant fact that institutions such as those, or the Imperial College of Science, are not paralysed by student disturbances, like the London School of Economics or mushroom growths like Essex, or Warwick, or Kent. An impoverished country should close them, and send the better students, a majority, elsewhere. Remember, I write on behalf of the great majority, both among people in general and among the students themselves: it is the pernicious minority that sells the pass and betrays the cause.

I DID NOT NEED TO TELL Nevins that, when I came home, a member of the University Grants Committee (of great administrative experience and judgment herself) described the Robbins Report to me as "stupid." The great American liberal received his lesson nearer home. Nevins was devoted to Columbia University, gave it in fact half-a-million dollars out of his life's savings. Shortly after, the Columbia students invaded the Administration buildings, wrecked the

President's offices and burned his files (as Dean Silber has described). It was heart-breaking for Nevins—and also an eye-opener: liberals who cherish illusions must expect awkward consequences. I did not need to pursue the argument with him any further—what shocked me was that anybody should have tried to make me agree to what I knew to be nonsense.

BUT THE NONSENSE was rampant, and humans always react like a herd. I was in the US again while the BBC singled out the new Vice-Chancellor of Essex university to deliver the Reith Lectures giving us a blue-print of what a modern university should be. (They wouldn't have asked me, who had a much better claim to speak on the subject, and had something more useful and salutary to say.)

The book makes pathetic reading today; but one must remember that poor Vice-Chancellor Albert Sloman, who has now been saddled with the blame by Lord Annan's Report on Essex, in fact was selected by these very people—academic liberals such as Annan himself—to be the standard-bearer of their ideas. No wonder they are so cross with him and seek to make him their scapegoat now that the consequences of their nonsensical ideas are apparent. Sloman himself tells us that "the Board in looking for a Vice-Chancellor presumably limited its choice to those who very broadly shared its views." The poor man continues: "potentially there are dangers in this arrangement, and I can only say that it has worked well in Essex. . . . We looked for people who would work together, who were in sympathy with the university programme and determined to see it through." (What dreary clichés!).

As for the programme, it is based all through on the false assumptions of academic liberalism: (a) that the country has illimitable resources to spend on education; (b) that there is an illimitable number of people qualified to profit significantly from being at university. Both untrue.

The unhappy Sloman envisaged departments carrying "as many as ten professors"—it is true that professors are ten a penny today, and innumerable academic jobs have been created everywhere for people not notably qualified to fill them. Friends of mine who have worked in the respectable provincial universities—which could be profitably expanded without proliferating new mushroom growths—inform me of the multiplication of jobs for people with nothing much to do, who spend their time making trouble. We all know that this parasitic growth is a marked feature of university expansion, too. As an important official of Oxford University wrote to me after my *Daily Telegraph* articles:

much of the money is not spent on education at all.

But this is in keeping with the inflated idea that "a university should, I believe, provide an experience of living as well as an opportunity for learning." Well, Essex has certainly provided the former—perhaps one more in keeping with the character of 20th century society, for what that is worth. "The University of Essex, along with the other universities, enjoys exceptionally favourable conditions of development. . . . It is better able to accommodate visiting professors and, with an international reputation, can be a Mecca attracting scholars from all over the world." That is to say, if anybody would want to go there and, if so, could get across the barriers and through the pickets.

"At the lowest level we shall at least contribute something to the diversity of British universities." The most useful contribution it has made has been to show up the false assumptions and values upon which much of the university expansion has been based. "We need more research in every aspect of modern societies." We do not—what we need is simply more work, not a top-heavy superstructure engaged in research into the diminishing number of people doing any real work. This chaff is expected to "evoke a lively response from modern students"—we see that the response is lively enough, but one of complete disrespect. (One of the students threw the book at the Vice-Chancellor's head, who responded mildly: "It is nice to have one's words thrown back at one.")

"The best way to make them responsible in any case," we read "is to give them responsibility. . . . We should like to give students more say in university policy than is provided by the students' council. . . ." And we have seen the results. "With the help of a grant from the Gulbenkian foundation we have set up a Unit for research into higher education. The Unit will be concerned first with the university's own problems of planning and organisation." So another bogus job has been created; it would be nice to know how much public money has been wasted on this place—in addition to the £32,000 worth of wanton damage specified by Lord Annan's Report on his bantling. "It"—the Unit—"will also study the impact of the university on its neighbourhood." I recall the remark of a young marine engineer to me—he was doing a real job of work—about the University of Sussex: "its name is mud among people down here."

An old working-man myself, of working-class background, my sympathies are all with the labouring elements of the community—farmers, agricultural workers, miners, mechanics, factory-

workers—who have been called on to support this wasteful superstructure which middle-class educationists have imposed on them without consulting them and for which they have no respect. No wonder the nation's economy is breaking down with all the intolerable burdens placed upon it—among them the astronomical waste on “education”, keeping young people in idleness who would be better employed doing productive work.

Sloman concludes: “our first students will still be in positions of influence and *responsibility* in the first two decades of the twenty-first century.” It is a solemn thought—but I have long since realised, though others have not, what our society is heading for. We need go no further, it is too sickening. What was to have been a blueprint has turned out an appalling object-lesson.

Who stole the arts?

“... the same suspicion of error as the visitor to an art gallery who, on coming to the portrait of a girl, reads in his catalogue: ‘Dromedary resting’.”

We are so acclimatized to “error”
That the concept might be said to have
Lapsed. No one is wrong any more.
(Except those who try to be right.)

“The King of Pornland”
Looks remarkably like a fat rat
Attended by thinner rats,

And “Beauty Queen”
A Strasbourg goose who, gagged and
Discreetly prepared, might prove edible.

“Six Deep Assorted Tarts”—
The cream of the blue stockings,
Not to be trifled with.

Symbolical, satirical, parodical—
Description is justification.
Pigments of the imagination. . . .

Example, a perspective of bleeding ovaries
Nailed to psychiatrists' couches
Carrying the cryptic attribution,
“School of Plath.”

And the stock obscenities of the day
(Oh Lord, oh Lord, whose image was it?),
The watercolour stood on its tiny head,
Simpletons wearing their genitals on their sleeves,
Every picture tells a dirty story.

You had it better, Proust,
You were permitted to suspect.
And lo! it was a mechanical error,
The custodian was justly admonished.

D. J. Enright

LETTERS

The 1914 War

IN YOUR AUGUST ISSUE, the President of Boston University declares that "When an intellectual proceeds . . . to rewrite history and to use his own interpretations as if they were historical data, he pollutes the well of the market-place."

If Chomsky is guilty of this crime, so, surely, is John Vaizey (same issue, p. 88) when he implies that the Liberal Government of Asquith and Grey was responsible for allowing (*sic*) "the 1914 War to break out and be continued."

Mr Vaizey is, no doubt, too young to remember at first hand the Notes that were exchanged and the debates that took place in the House of Commons during that fateful week in 1914. But he should know that the War had already started before Britain decided to enter it. Once it had begun, nothing any British government could have done would have stopped it until (if we had remained on the side-lines) the Germans and the Austrians had decisively defeated the French and their Russian allies.

In 1922, a fairly highly-placed German assured me that if Sir Edward Grey had firmly announced Britain's intention to enter the War before it actually broke out, the catastrophe might have been prevented. It was, of course, constitutionally impossible for him to make any such announcement at that time. If he had done so, it does not seem very probable that it would have affected the issue.

T. C. OWTRAM

*Villa Belvedere,
Gragnano, Lucca*

IT WAS NOT necessary for Britain to enter the 1914 war. It did so because of a series of secret alliances; and it was utterly unprepared for the war. Far better to have allowed a short sharp defeat of France and Russia and saved us—and mankind—the horrors. And what about the refusal of all negotiated peace? The Liberal government's record is shameful, as it was on Ireland, women, and the economy.

JOHN VAIZEY

*Brunel University
London*

Who Needs Heroes?

THE KERNEL of Max Beloff's essay, "The Sally Hemings Affair" (ENCOUNTER, September) is a fine brief analysis of Thomas Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemings. Reinforcing the idea that not a single great man in history has escaped the inevitable—painting a picture of him which is very different from the actual man—is especially important for the American people at this juncture in history.

Omitted, however, was a pursuit of the thesis that the American people are actively pursuing literary works which debunk "the idealised version of their previous history . . . so as to make the grimmer aspects

of the American present more acceptable." Professor Beloff presents an overly-critical view of the American people. It is true that the conceptions of American heroes suited the needs and inclinations of the masses. The idealised leader became the real great man for the people, while the concrete original was not viewed as he really was. What Fawn Brodie and others present in demythologising Thomas Jefferson will be done, I feel, with many other American heroes, past and present. The negative view of former President Lyndon Johnson began this process, and the fall of his successor is causing its rapid acceleration. It will cause not only other critical books about America's heroes to be published but a re-writing of children's textbooks as well. In order to be able to deal with the realities of contemporary life, children are going to need a perspective of our leaders as people of flesh-and-blood who have sometimes erred when important or everyday actions had to be taken.

Rather than the negative interpretation of escapism from responsibility, allow me to suggest that the current trend indicates a strength of the American people. No longer can the people look *only* to idealised leaders to lead us away from the difficulties facing our society. The American people now look to themselves and realise that each person has to pitch in to overcome the difficult challenges of corruption and inflation that are the headlines of 1974. The literary trend conveys the clear impression that those whom we placed on pedestals were not wholly to blame for our problems, nor wholly deserving of credit for our successes. Americans now have to adjust to a new kind of hero embodied in the current President—a person like the rest of us who has great responsibilities placed upon his shoulders but who needs the active aid of the people to do the job.

HERBERT A. YOSKOWITZ

*Baltimore,
Maryland*

"The New Proletariat"

I FOUND Jonathan Power's article on migration ["The New Proletariat", September] lucid and thought-provoking even by standards formed by reading ENCOUNTER for 16 years.

His Irish examples I thought particularly interesting, living as I do in a part of County Cork with a fairly down-at-heels agriculture, haphazard tourism, and ill-regulated industrial development. Notable is a projected oil refinery in Bantry Bay which, in the words of one of its "barkers", would "put Bantry on its feet for a hundred years." This turned out to mean that for three years a huge construction force would disrupt the social and economic patterns of life, after which at the cost of much destruction of agricultural land, scenic beauty and tourism there would be employment for a small work-force of largely expatriate technicians.

This is part of a policy of redirecting migration from England or the United States into the cities: Cork City is to double its population by 1990. Thanks to Irish planning laws and a general attitude in town-bred politicians that no area of scenic beauty or rural economy should stand in the way of industry, industries of the petro-chemical variety are being

attracted to coastal sites, as this is easier and cheaper than stimulating the traditional Irish cottage industries—although it is the latter that Irish nationalists from Thomas Davies to Michael Davitt saw as best for the country.

Unless this process is reversed the Irish countryside will be quietly run down. One hopes that the Glen-columnkille experiment described by Jonathan Power will be repeated. Another hopeful development, very noticeable in West Cork, is the immigration of young English people who patch up derelict houses and refertilise under-used or marginal land. They are often motivated by the ecology ideal, and rural Ireland is a far better place to practise it than rural England where the pressures of the consumer society are never far away. If young English people or Americans of Irish descent, disillusioned with urban life, want to return here, they would be helping Ireland far more than by attending St Patrick's Day parades or (dare I say?) supporting the I.R.A.

Paradoxically, Ireland is one of the few European countries left where rural renewal is a possibility: underpopulated, with little commitment to heavy

industry and with a people not far removed from the land—and at the same time facing a sort of Gadarene rush towards those dangers that Mr Power discusses. Basically there are two schools of thought—that of the people who would like to see Ireland as the garden of Europe (do you remember when Kent was called “the garden of England”?) with a flourishing countryside based on agricultural and horticulture and craft industries; and that of the people who would like to see it as the industrial junk-yard of Europe—a home for industries banned elsewhere (seven oil refineries are projected!), a population driven off the land into remarkably ill-planned and ugly urban developments, a traditional society surviving emigration only to yield to intramigration.

I very much hope that Jonathan Power's article may be reprinted in an Irish journal, or produced as a pamphlet to lie on the desk of every thoughtful man in the country.

D. C. ROSE

*Kealkil,
Co. Cork,
Ireland*

Virtues and Vices of “Foreign Aid”

A Letter from Moscow—By DR SERGEI ZIMIN

RECENTLY I HAVE READ an article of Professor P. Bauer of the London School of Economics, published in the March issue of your magazine under the eloquent title: “Foreign Aid, Forever? Critical Reflections on a Myth of Our Time.” Since I myself study the problems of aid to the developing countries and since I personally know Professor Bauer, I would like to express my opinion on the question under discussion.

It is well known that the West is at great pains to find a way out of the so-called “crisis of aid.” The first Development Decade proclaimed by the United Nations for the 1960s has been rightly called the “Decade of Disillusion.” Even the Pearson Commission Report spoke of its unsatisfactory results. The forecasts for the second Development Decade are not encouraging, either. In the West, however, the entire range of urgent problems in economic relations between the developed and developing nations has begun to be artificially reduced to solving only one question—that of granting aid.

It appears that behind the concepts and programmes of “invigoration” of aid certain circles in the donor countries try to hide their political, economic, and strategic military interests. Through “aid” they seek to consolidate unequal relations with the developing nations and keep them in the orbit of their socio-economic system. Confirmations of this assertion can be found in the statements of some prominent politicians, among them Ministers of Overseas Development R. Prentice and J. Hart, in the studies of the Overseas Development Institute, etc.

The opposite view that aid is unnecessary, to which Professor Bauer adheres, is less familiar.

I ACQUAINTED MYSELF to a certain extent with the

professor's scientific views when I was working on my thesis at the London School of Economics. During our meetings Professor Bauer noted that we agreed on certain questions in our critical attitudes to foreign aid. But I would say that our conclusions differed.

For a number of years now Professor Bauer has been consistently coming out against the granting of economic aid to the developing nations. As an alternative he suggests the free import of foreign private capital into these countries.

While recognising the great experience and knowledge of Professor Bauer concerning the problems of the developing countries, it should be noted, however, that his views can hardly find wide positive response there. The young states do not wish a return to the free and uncontrolled exploitation by foreign capital of their natural and human resources. One could cite many examples of this. No possible increase in the Gross National Product thanks to foreign-owned enterprises can solve the economic tasks of development on a national scale. The average quantitative “benefits” for the developing countries from foreign private enterprise can only add to the injustices of the system of distribution of national wealth in these countries, which has been inherited from the colonial past. The professor himself points to this danger, though only in regard to economic aid.

Knowing the “academism” of Professor Bauer's approach to the problem under review, I saw nothing surprising in that he fully prescind from the social aspects of development of the so-called Third World. The need for social change in the developing countries is now axiomatic and generally recognised everywhere, including the West. Yet Professor Bauer suggests that the struggle for social change only

hinders the economic progress of these countries. While subjecting Western aid to just criticism for promoting "unsuitable external models" in the developing countries, he himself offers them a model of free market economy that is foreign to the multiplicity of economic forms often found there, and propagates the capitalist way of development.

IN GENERAL, many Western views on the economic problems of the developing countries do not extend beyond the strategy of "quantitative growth." Moreover, they are artificially detached from the implementation of socio-economic changes in these countries. Deliberately or not, this separation of the problems of economic progress from the need for effecting social changes in the Third World countries is used by certain circles in the developed nations for the "theoretisation" of their attempts to continue exploiting these countries and is aimed at keeping them within the system of capitalism.

Western economists, and apparently Professor Bauer among them, admit that not all, but many developing countries are badly in need of external sources of financing. But Marxists believe that aid has a historically definite role to play as no more than a temporary and supplementary factor of the economic development of these countries. The Soviet Union, which itself experienced economic growing pains in the past, is consistently advocating this point of view. Many Western scientists, including Dr R. Prebisch, well-known Argentine economist, have also arrived at the same conclusion. And, of course, the temporary need of the developing countries for external sources of financing by no means presupposes that aid can be replaced by the import of foreign private capital. It is to ensure that this need remains only a temporary, supplementary factor that radical social and economic changes are to be effected.

Focusing attention on the questions of aid and its "crisis" artificially narrows the range of problems being solved by the developing countries and distracts their peoples from the establishment of more equitable international economic relations.

DR SERGEI ZIMIN

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The New Inflation

MAY I ADD the following to your discussion of The New Inflation? My temerity in sending this one-page recipe for dealing with the inflation derives from my recent publication of a fuller non-technical analysis in the paperback *Flation* (Pelican, 1974).

There are two problems. The basic problem is how to *stop* the inflation. Since there is no possibility of doing this quickly, we have the secondary problem of protecting the worst sufferers. This calls for the most complete possible Indexing of monetary obligations like pensions, wages, savings, rents, taxes, fines—everything indexable. The argument that this would weaken the fight against inflation is like an argument against vaccination because it weakens the fight against smallpox.

The first step in the solution of the basic problem is to remove a dangerous traditional illusion—the illusion that inflation can be caused only by excess demand—i.e. by too much total spending by the Public and the Government together. This is often called "too much money." Unlike most past inflations, *our present inflation is not due to too much total spending*. The rising prices are not caused by the buyers' demanding more than we can produce. The high unemployment is incontrovertible proof that we can produce much more than is being demanded.

The operative cause of our present inflation is the established expectation of continuing inflation. Wages (and thus costs) are raised because prices rise. Prices are raised because costs rise. And total spending is increased by the Government to avoid reductions in *real* purchases (at the inflated prices) which would result in catastrophic unemployment. Thus we have a three-part interlocking mechanism behind our inflationary spiral.

The traditional cure for inflation—cutting total demand—will not work because the cause is *not* "excess demand." Restriction of demand can *only* increase unemployment. Its effect on inflation is negligible (unless carried to the extreme of engineering a Depression rivalling that of the 1930s, which of course will not be done). Nor can the three interlocking forces be stopped by appeals for "restraint." Each one of them sees such appeals as directed unfairly at itself. They can be contained only by an interlocking policy which not only is fairly directed at all three forces but is also *seen* to be as fairly directed.

This is, of course, an Incomes policy with its wage-and-price regulation. As a permanent institution it is anathema to a free society. It can only be suffered temporarily. But it must last long enough to tame the rising curve of inflationary expectations. "Incomes policy" is, of course, also tainted by an unfortunate history of failure. But the failure was largely due to its having been imposed from above on reluctant administrators who were slaves of the traditional illusion that inflation can be caused only by "too much total spending." A new and interlocking disinflationary incomes policy is on the agenda of the day.

ABBA P. LERNER

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Silent, Bitter Majorities

I PERSONALLY both like and respect Mr T. R. Fyvel but I cannot agree that the law-abiding majority passively accepts minority resistance to the law and that it is unsure of its bearings. The law-abiding majority is in fact increasingly bitter and resentful. Its verdict upon Stephen Gately, the victim in London's Red Lion Square demonstration, was that it is the business of students to study, and that if you don't want to get hurt you shouldn't participate in Left-wing demonstrations. Its verdict upon the I.R.A.'s Price sisters who went on hunger strike was that they should have been allowed to die, and that they should have been hanged anyway.

What is frightening is the width of the gap between the majority and the tiny Left-wing minority which determines the treatment of crime and the preservation of order generally. This minority—as was made obvious when capital punishment for murder was abolished—not only disregards public opinion, but has a positive contempt for it.

I'm not here concerned about whether the majority or the minority is right. Protest against the school of

thought represented by our present (at the time of writing) Home Secretary seems absolutely futile. But at least I can make it clear what the majority feels. To use a vulgar American saying, "You can screw me all night, but you can't make me like it. . . ."

JOHN BRAINE

Woking,
Surrey

Trieste—or Zurich

IN YOUR September issue John Weightman writes: "... It was a brilliant idea to think of James Joyce, Tristan Tzara and Lenin as being all together . . . in Trieste during the First World War." If that was Tom Stoppard's idea in his new play *Travesties*, then it is brilliant to the point of travesty. It is more than *Lokal=patriotismus* that moves me to write that it was not Trieste but Zurich. A little more respect for history, dear comrades (as Lenin, in Zurich's *Spiegelgasse* would have said), and for geography.

FRANÇOIS BONDY

Die Weltwoche,
Zurich

"The New Diplomacy of Movement" (August 1974). . . .

Donald Watt is Professor of International History in the University of London. His books include *Personalities and Policies* (1965) and, *A History of the World in the 20th Century* (1967), and he is co-editor of volumes on *Current British Foreign Policy* (1970–73). . . .

Edward Lucie-Smith is one of the foremost London art critics. His books include *Movements in Art Since 1945* (1969), *Eroticism in Western Art*, and *Symbolist Art* (Thames & Hudson, 1972). . . .

John Fuller is a Lecturer in English at the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of Magdalen College. His volumes of poetry include *Cannibals & Missionaries* and *Epistles to Several Persons* (Secker & Warburg, 1972, 1974). . . .

Tao Tao Sanders lectures at the Oriental Institute, Oxford University. She is the translator of a volume of Chinese folk tales, *The Herd Boy and the Ox* (Oxford University Press, 1971), and *Red Candles: The Selected Poems of Wen I-to* (Cape, 1972). . . .

Jonathan Raban is the author of *Soft City*, published earlier this year by Hamish Hamilton. . . .

A. L. Rowse, historian and poet, has specialised mainly in the Elizabethan period, both in history and literature—with a quartet of volumes on *The Elizabethan Age* and a comparable quartet on Shakespeare and his circle. Dr Rowse is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. . . .

Georg Wolf is one of the editors of *Der Spiegel* in Hamburg. . . .

AUTHORS

Shiva Naipaul's two novels are *Fireflies* and *The Chip-Chip Gatherers*, both published by André Deutsch. . . .

Dr Bruno Bettelheim was, until recently, Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Chicago and head of the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School there. Among his books are two scientific studies on the treatment and rehabilitation of emotionally disturbed children, *Love is Not Enough* (1950) and *Truants from Life* (1955). A more general work of social analysis was published in 1960 under the title, *The Informed Heart: Autonomy in a Mass Age*. His latest books are *Children of the Dream* (1969) and *A Home for the Heart* (just published by Thames & Hudson). . . .

Stefan Kanfer is an Associate Editor of *Time Magazine* in New York. . . .

François Bondy is an editor of *Die Weltwoche* in Zürich. He is at present a Resident Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. . . .

Hans Morgenthau is a distinguished American diplomatic historian. He is now Professor of Political Science at the New School for Social Research in New York. He was previously at the University of Chicago and the City College of the City University of New York. Among his books are *The Purpose of American Politics* (1960), *Politics in the 20th Century* (1962), and *Truth and Power* (1970). His previous articles in *ENCOUNTER* include "Arguing About the Cold War" (May 1967) and

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Life & Letters Today

North Dakota

LAST STAND: As an assault on progress it will have about as much effect as being stabbed with an omelette. Nevertheless, the school board in Drake, North Dakota, has submitted a hefty claim for the town as one of the last outposts of medievalism by ordering the burning of books that offend their sensitivities.

Three dozen copies of Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse Five*, about the Allied bombing of Dresden, have been denounced as "tools of the devil" and put to the torch. Other books scheduled to be destroyed before their alleged profanity can corrupt the youth of Drake are James Dickey's *Deliverance*, and anthologies of short stories by Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck and William Faulkner.

Although all five members of the school board admit that they haven't read any of the books, they have fired Bruce Severy, the 27-year-old English teacher who assigned them to students. "Most of the criticism focuses specifically on some four-letter words commonly referred to as slang" he says. "Their action is academically dishonest, anti-intellectual and irrational."

Drake is appropriately close to where Custer made his last stand.

DAILY MAIL

Ceylon

O. BIT: Mrs Bandaranaike's censors in Sri Lanka still seem to need a little training in their jobs. Four days after opposition newspapers were closed down there, and anti-Government meetings banned, this notice appeared yesterday in the obituary column of the Government-controlled *Ceylon Daily News*:

"O'Cracy—the death occurred under tragic circumstances of D. E. M. O'Cracy, beloved husband of T. Ruth, loving father of L. I. Bertie, brother of Faith, Hope and Justitia. Interred on Saturday 20th April."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Frankfurt

MARXMANSHIP: The Editors of the "DUDEN", the great German-language etymological dictionary, have replied to the critique of their latest edition from the Association of East German Journalists. They had been accused of "linguistic manipulation", presumably in the interests of West German propaganda. In their reply they insisted that all the words and their usages were the results of objective research in all the German-speaking areas, "without the slightest attempt to lean one way or the other. . . ." Considered specially dangerous was the use of such phrases as "die Mauer (the Berlin Wall)" and "countries behind the Iron Curtain", as contrasted with "die freie Welt (the free world)". What evidently upset the East-Germans was the absence of the word "Klassenkampf (class struggle)." The West-Germans explained that it was a verbal concept that had no precise equivalent in literal meaning or common usage.

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

Berlin

A-TO-Z: About 500 license plates with letters referring to Nazi organisations are on automobiles here, German officials said today.

The letters are SA, the initials of the brown-shirted stormtroopers; SS, for the Nazi execution squads and elite troops; HJ for the Hitler Youth and KZ for concentration camps.

A member of the opposition Christian Democratic party asked yesterday if the city had to issue such plates. Karl Koenig, Social Democratic head of the City Economics Department that issues the plates, said that, under West German law, requests for such letters cannot be turned down.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

ANGLO-AMERICAN DIFFERENCES: American newspaper reporters [writes Alfred Friendly] look with awe and envy at the insouciance with which their British colleagues treat the names of the people they write about. They tend to omit entirely the Christian name when it does not come readily to mind ("Mr Fuller, inventor of the geodesic dome . . ."), they insist that the middle name of all Americans who have one is the front half of a British double surname ("Mr Biddle Duke and Mr Cabot Lodge, the former ambassadors . . ."), and they content themselves with spelling any name, particularly any American name, more or less as it sounds ("Walter Lippman," "Sen Javitz").

But a photo caption and five paragraphs by Penndenis about an American lady identified as Jouette Shousse is a record. Internal evidence, itself pretty tangled, suggests that the subject is Mrs Jouett Shouse (her late husband, as was certainly his right, spelled his first name without a terminal 'e' and his last without a double 's'). Her Christian name is Catherine. She made her splendid donation of her estate as a music center not last year, as Penndenis reports, but eight years ago.

Incidentally, was she entirely kind in relating, and Mr Penn Denis in reporting, that her choice for the American presidency, Mr Nixon, puts himself to sleep with classical music? Many people, including other American presidents—I am thinking, inter alia, of Mr Geoffreyson—maintained themselves quite awake while listening to classical music.

THE OBSERVER

Washington, D.C.

INFERNAL: Dr Kissinger is said to have remarked that his difficulties in negotiating a ceasefire between North and South Vietnam is nothing compared with dealing with the various Arab parties and Israel, and that he now understands what Dante's *Inferno* is all about.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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